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THE MOFFATS

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Harvard Divinity School

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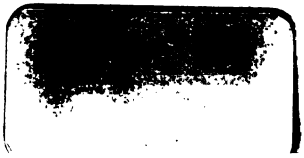

ROBERT AND MARY MOFFAT, TWO
CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS WHO, AT THE
THRESHOLD OF LIFE, RISKED
ALL TO CARRY THROUGH
THE UNTROD PATHS
OF AFRICA THE
GOSPEL OF A
LOVING
GOD

Photos, London Missicnary Society

THE MOFFATS

BY

ETHEL DANIELS HUBBARD

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY
JESSIE GILLESPIE

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TO MY MOTHER
AND MY AUNT

THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

NOTE

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CHAPTER I

ROBERT AND MARY

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
  How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
  I clasped her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
  Flew o'er me and my dearie,
For dear to me as light and life
  Was my sweet Highland Mary.

—*Robert Burns*

"ROBERT AND MARY HAD TALKED IT ALL OVER FOR THE LAST TIME."

I

ROBERT AND MARY

A SUMMER evening in the north of England cast its phantom light upon the fields and the garden and the old stone house at the end of the lane. The fragrance of roses drifted through the air and mingled subtly with the bitter-sweet thoughts of the girl who sat alone by her chamber window. A few minutes before she had come indoors and taken refuge in her room, knowing that only solitude and the stillness of night could smooth the tangle of the day's experience.

Almost mechanically she said over again the words she had spoken with such sad confidence earlier in the evening when Robert was by her side, his very presence giving her courage. "Impelled by feelings I cannot master, held back by ties I dare not break." Out there in the shadowy lane between the hedgerows and the hawthorn trees, Robert and Mary had talked it all over for the last time, only to reach the same unwelcome

conclusion they had reached before—he must go and she must stay. The difficulty of the situation was more bearable when he was there to "share it a'" and point out the one gleam of hope for the future. Alone, her heart quailed before the thought of what she must endure. If only Robert were like other men, content to settle in England to a worthy work, driven by no heart-breaking determination to leave home and country and go to the ends of the earth! How easy then would be her lot, not unlike that of other women; how plain her duty, for her father did not oppose her marrying Robert because he was a gardener in his service, but solely because he was possessed by this terrible resolve to spend his life in some wild, heathen country from which he would probably never return!

But that vagrant thought did not linger in the girl's mind, for she knew full well that the very reason she loved Robert with the whole strength of her being was that a great purpose stood like a fixed star over his life. She read that purpose in his black eyes, which flashed forth the old Covenanter spirit of his Scotch mother. She had seen its outworkings every day during the half-

year he had lived at Dukinfield; in the painstaking way he grafted and pruned the young trees in her father's garden; in the eagerness with which he turned to his books when the day's work was done, as if he had a goal to reach and there were no time to lose; in the fervor with which he played his violin winter evenings as they sat around the blazing fire in the grate, played as if life held a vision for him.

No, though she, Mary Smith, be left at home desolate and heart-broken, she would never, never stand between Robert Moffat and his purpose. She would acquire a purpose for endurance to match his for action. He must go and she must stay—and God help them both! With a sob catching her breath, she knelt and asked God to make them able to drink the cup he had placed in their trembling hands. And then, tired out with the heart-searching experiences of the day, she fell asleep.

Meanwhile, out between the hedgerows which bounded the Manchester road, a young man walked with dogged gait, as if force of will alone held him to his course. He was tall and straight, with an agile, firmly knit figure which told of an

outdoor life and athletic training. If the twilight had been bright enough to reveal his face, one could have read a sensitive nature made strong by an indomitable will. The determined flash in his eyes showed that Robert Moffat would do his duty, though it thwart his dearest desire. "There is no other way," he said wearily to himself, "no other way for Mary or for me. God has laid his claim upon us both, for me to go, for her to stay, and we may not disobey. Some time he may lay his claim upon Mary's parents, and they will let her come to me in South Africa or the South Sea Islands or wherever I may be, and then——." But even as he said the words with which they had comforted each other earlier in the evening, a great wave of homesick longing swept over him, and the future loomed drear and forbidding. In imagination he pictured the enormous distance he must go, the voyage of three months, then the slow journey on foot or by ox-cart into the interior, and his heart left back in old England, up north in Cheshire, with blue-eyed Mary of Dukinfield. Alas for Robert! He had little dreamed it would cost him so dear to carry out this precious scheme of his, which had

come to him with all the force of a command from heaven. He had foreseen that it would mean a terrific wrench to tear himself away from the little home group in Scotland, especially from his dark-eyed, beautiful mother, who had always been a mystery and an inspiration to him. But never had he known or imagined—how could he?—the cruel hurt of loving a girl with all his heart and going away to leave her, perhaps forever.

The tall chimneys and spires of Manchester loomed close at hand, and Robert Moffat strode through the dingy outskirts, past the cottages of the spinners and the weavers into the broader streets of the city, turning finally into that quiet side street where he had his lodging. The long twilight was fading from the west, but scarcely would it vanish wholly before the first signs of dawn were glimmering in the east. Such is the magic of these summer nights in the north.

A day or two hence Robert was to start on his way to Scotland for that dreaded parting with his father, mother, brothers, and sisters in the stone cottage by the Firth of Forth. Then back again to Manchester for the meetings which would celebrate his departure to a foreign country,

for one last walk over the familiar road to Dukinfield to the girl who would be out among the trees and the flowers awaiting his coming, an agonizing farewell, then the journey south to London, and finally the harbor and the ship and —the shores of England no more!

CHAPTER II

A YOUNG MAN'S PROBLEM

I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.
—*Saint Paul*

"HE . . . CAME TO A SUDDEN HALT BEFORE A POSTER WHICH HUNG BY THE ROADSIDE."

II

A YOUNG MAN'S PROBLEM

THE bitter crisis which the young lovers were compelled to face had its origin in a chain of events beginning far back in Robert Moffat's boyhood. In his cottage home in Scotland there had come to the small boy, all unknown to himself, the first beckonings toward the high destiny of his manhood; years later the shadowy summons to the child became a clear call of duty to the young man.

It was after Robert had left his home in Scotland and begun work as gardener on a large estate at High Leigh, England, that one summer evening he set out on foot for Warrington, about six miles away, intending to make some purchases in the shops. It was sunset time, and a peculiar hush seemed to brood over field and town. Stirred by the beauty of the hour and the scene, the young man fell to dreaming of his future and the rôle he would like to play in life. His thoughts dwelt fondly upon a new position which had been offered

him, upon its responsibility and importance and the honor it implied to a lad of nineteen. His fancy drew a sunny picture of the life he would lead in the new environment, of the personal advantages it would yield him, as well as the opportunities for doing good. With a glow of satisfaction at the prospect, he crossed the bridge which led into Warrington and came to a sudden halt before a poster which hung by the roadside. Mastered by a curiosity he could not explain, he read the words once and again: "Missionary Meeting, Guild Hall, Warrington, Thursday Evening, July 25. Speaker, Reverend William Roby, of Manchester." The date was past, the meeting over, and the speaker already departed to his home. What invisible hand wove the spell which held Robert Moffat rooted to the spot, dead to all around him?

By a quick process of association the words awakened memories that had been for a long time slumbering in the young man's mind. He was back in the stone cottage at Carronshore, Scotland, a little boy sitting with his brothers and sisters around the fireside while the north wind whistled outside, rebelling at his stint of knitting

or sewing, which he thought fit for girls only, but listening intently while their mother read them stories of the daring Moravian missionaries in Greenland and Labrador. He was looking again into his mother's strangely beautiful face, with its interplay of severity and tenderness, gloom and radiance. For a moment he caught again that wonderful smile, which illumined her face as sunshine brightens a gray day in April. Then, all at once, he understood why the placard, with its notice of a bygone event, stirred such a commotion in his mind. God was calling him, Robert Moffat, to the life of a missionary, exactly as he had called the men and women of the Moravian church years before.

From that night, one question, and one only, haunted Robert's mind, forcibly expelling the old dreams of the future, as well as the doubts and perplexities of the year just past. From that moment, as he afterwards said, he was "another man with another heart." How was he to become a missionary? None of the great missionary societies in London would accept him, he thought to himself, because he had never been to an academy or college. He took a hasty review

of his school career and found it brief and fragmentary enough. Little or no systematic education had fallen to his lot. First, there had been the parish school, taught by " Wully " Mitchell, the stern taskmaster, who chastised his small pupils because they floundered hopelessly in the catechism, their first reading-lesson after their a-b-c's. A few years later he had trudged by the side of his older brother, Alexander, to Falkirk, the next town. There for six months he had studied writing and bookkeeping in the regular classes and picked up a little geography and astronomy after hours by listening outside the circle of older boys, when they took their extra lesson for extra pay, and seeking explanation of the knotty points from his brother as they walked home. At fourteen he had been apprenticed to learn the trade of gardener and had begun his day's work at four o'clock, even on the dark, cold mornings of a Scottish winter, when he had to rap his knuckles against the handle of the spade to bring feeling into them. Long hours and hard work had not deterred him, however, from going occasionally to evening school to study Latin and

from taking lessons at the anvil and on the violin from a kind and versatile neighbor.

It was not his parents' fault that he had had so few school advantages, but his own, for he had wanted to be a man before his time and go to sea as a sailor. With a friendly captain he took several voyages in a trading vessel, but the hairbreadth escapes along that dangerous coast were too many for a boy of ten to relish, and he returned to his father's house a "sadder and wiser" lad.

This reminiscence gave Robert the needed clue to solve his enigma, how to become a missionary. It was simple enough. He would again go to sea as a sailor, cross the ocean to some foreign land, and there teach the heathen people about Jesus Christ, the Savior, to whom he had recently yielded his passionate homage after months of doubt and struggle.

When Robert Moffat had left his home in Scotland just before his eighteenth birthday, to take his new position as gardener at High Leigh in Cheshire, his mother walked with him to the Firth of Forth, from which he was to go by ship to England. It seemed like a long separation to

the mother and her boy, for England and Scotland were very far apart in those days. Excitement and regret blazed in Robert's eyes as he looked toward the shore and then into his mother's serious face. "Now, my Robert," said she, "let us stand here for a few minutes, for I wish to ask one favor of you before we part. I only ask whether you will read a chapter in the Bible every morning, and another every evening?" "Mother," interrupted the boy rather indignantly, "you know I read my Bible." "I know you do," she replied, "but you do not read it regularly, or as a duty you owe to God, its author. Now I shall return home with a happy heart, inasmuch as you have promised to read the Scriptures daily. Oh, Robert, my son," and her eyes shone with tears, "read much in the New Testament. Read much in the Gospels, the blessed Gospels. Then you cannot well go astray. If you pray, the Lord himself will teach you." The passionate enthusiasm which burned in her own life was soon to catch fire in her son's life with an intensity of which she little dreamed.

In the days that followed, Robert was tempted to abjure that promise to his mother, since its

fulfilment brought him but little satisfaction at first and sore uneasiness later on. As he went about his work in the garden at High Leigh, one question harassed him continually. "What think ye of Christ? What think ye of Christ?" Must he answer that question? Would it give him no peace until he dealt with it fairly and squarely? Perhaps he could dodge its attacks if he should give up reading the Bible. At the thought, his mother's face, with its dark, pleading eyes, came vividly before him, and he knew he could never break his promise to her, whatever commotion it might cause in his mind.

One night he had a horrible dream. It seemed as if his sins were piled up into a great mountain and were tumbling down upon him. When he awoke, shivering with terror, he fell on his knees in prayer for the first time in many weeks. The specter of his dream pursued him into the daylight and dogged his steps wherever he went, but there was no one to whom he could confide his misery. When he tried to pray, a black cloud seemed to come between himself and God.

Every evening he betook himself to his garden lodge and there, in solitude undisturbed, read and

reread the New Testament, even as his mother had bidden him. As he read, meaning gradually crept into the words which had hitherto seemed so blank. "Can it be possible that I have never understood what I have been reading?" he exclaimed with a full heart. One passage and then another shone out of the fog, until he could see his way straight to Jesus Christ and could read the friendly welcome upon his face. Then he had all the light he needed to chase the bogies of fear from his life forever.

With boyish enthusiasm he threw himself into the work of the Wesleyan Methodists, whose straightforward preaching had helped to "stab his spirit broad awake." The Methodists were a new sect, much misunderstood and maligned, and Robert's connection with them brought him into disfavor with his employers, Mr. and Mrs. Leigh. Hitherto they had been uncommonly interested in their young gardener, who had such quiet ways and such determined black eyes. About this time a flattering offer was made him to become factor, steward, and gardener combined, with hundreds of acres of farm land, a garden, and a number of men under his charge. But one condition was

attached to the offer,—that he should give up the Methodist meetings. Robert Moffat replied with the spicy candor of a Scotchman, "I thank you for your good intentions, but I would prefer my God to white and yellow ore."

It was not long before another position was proffered with no such conditions attached. Robert was looking forward to its acceptance, when, near the bridge at Warrington, the whole meaning of life was changed in a moment by a few printed words on a poster by the roadside. Since that memorable night there had been but one concern in life for Robert Moffat. How should he find a way into the lofty, adventurous career of a missionary? Would there be a place within its charmed circle for a young Scotch gardener, with no pretensions to learning, but "a man for a' that"?

CHAPTER III

"FARE THEE WEEL"

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
And I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only love,
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

—*Robert Burns*

"FOR HER, THAT AUTUMN WAS GRAY WITH LONELINESS."

III

"FARE THEE WEEL"

IN the city of Manchester, not many miles from High Leigh, there was to be held a gathering of Wesleyan Methodists which would last several days. Being exactly in the mood for such an event, Robert Moffat resolved to attend and persuaded Hamlet Clarke, his chum, to accompany him. Accordingly, on an autumn day, the two set forth along the road which led through the green fields and the picturesque villages into Manchester, the busiest city of northern England. The usual cloud of black smoke hung low over the city as they approached, betokening the presence of the great cotton industries, but nothing there was to betoken the presence that day of a young Scotchman who would soon undertake an industry more stupendous in its effect for all time than the output of those great factories.

Not long after their arrival in town, a name, at once familiar and mysterious, caught Robert's attention. The Reverend William Roby! The very

name he had read on the poster by the Warrington bridge that memorable evening not long before! What would he be like, the unknown man whose name had figured in the most crucial experience of Robert's life? To see and hear this wonderful man would be like having your storybook heroes step out of the pages where you had known them and become flesh and blood before your eyes. So it was with tense excitement that Robert took his place in the meeting which Mr. Roby was scheduled to address. The mysterious personage soon appeared upon the platform, a real man, dignified and grave, but with a sure friendliness in his face. There was a true ring in his voice as he spoke, and Robert sat quite still, listening to his earnest words with a burning unrest in his heart.

That evening, as they returned to their lodgings, a chance remark made Robert's black eyes flash with interest. "Mr. Roby," some one was saying, "oh yes, he is a great missionary; he often sends out young men to the heathen!" What was that? Sends out young men to the heathen? As Robert Moffat went to his room, a project was shaping in his mind, such a daring

project that he lay awake most of the night praying for courage to make the venture on the morrow. Though fearless in danger and immovable when principle was at stake, Robert was by nature intensely shy, and to carry through the plan that he had made meant a severe ordeal. He confided the scheme to Hamlet Clarke and asked him to go with him, but Hamlet refused point-blank, though he consented to go as far as the door and wait outside.

The next morning two young men could have been seen walking through the streets of Manchester, one with a worried look in his eyes and a strangely preoccupied manner. The distance they had to go was more than a mile, yet it hardly sufficed to quiet the pounding of his heart. They turned into the fatal street at last, and Robert loitered intentionally, yet the dreaded number came nearer and nearer. Would it be cowardly to turn and run away? He stood at the very door, but, even as his hand reached for the knocker, his nerve failed, and he rushed ingloriously to the street and to his friend waiting near by. A second time he marched up to the door, but scarcely had he set foot upon the first step

when the audacity of the undertaking came over him, and he fled again. To gather courage he walked up and down a few minutes, and then strode resolutely to the door and knocked. No sooner was the deed done than he would have given a thousand pounds, had he possessed them, to recall the act. He hoped, oh, how he hoped, that Mr. Roby would not be at home, and never again would he be trapped into such presumption. At that moment a maid opened the door, and Robert asked in a faltering voice, "Is Mr. Roby within?" "Yes," was the reply, and he was shown into the parlor.

A few moments of suspense passed. Then a step was heard in the hall, and the man whom he both dreaded and longed to see entered the room. Not so formidable was he, after all,—just a frank, friendly man with a cordial grip of the hand. Robert Moffat's tale was simply told, and Mr. Roby listened with a sympathetic smile, asking a few questions now and then to encourage him to tell of his experience in becoming a Christian, and of his purpose to "help in the missionary cause," as he modestly phrased it. He carefully avoided mention of the fact that it was Mr. Roby's

name on the poster which had led him to his house. The outcome was that Mr. Roby offered to write to the "directors of the society," as he called them, to see if they would accept Robert as a missionary. He would report their reply as soon as he received it.

It was several weeks before the expected letter reached High Leigh, where Robert Moffat had been watching daily for its coming with a boy's intolerance of delay. He tore the envelope open and read:

November 27, 1815.

Dear Sir:

I have been anxiously waiting for an answer to the letter which I wrote to the directors of the Missionary Society respecting you and did not receive it till this morning. It informs me that at present they have so many applications they cannot receive all who offer their services for missionary work, and are therefore obliged to select those who possess the most promising acquirements. On this account they are under the necessity of declining your offer at present.

What a blow to the high hopes he had cherished during those weeks of waiting! Why had he not known that it would end this way, when he had so little education to give him favor in their eyes?

"Obliged to select those who possess the most promising acquirements!" What could he do to attain those "promising acquirements"? Would Mr. Roby consider his case lost or would he try some other way? He read on:

"Nevertheless, will you not come to Manchester and let me place you in a situation near by, that I may examine you as to your fitness for missionary work?"

"Not knowing whither he went," so far as his future was concerned, Robert Moffat went out from the garden lodge at High Leigh and journeyed again over the road to Manchester to entrust his prospects to the hands of a man he had seen only twice, but in whom he felt a sure confidence, nevertheless. When he reached the city, Mr. Roby took him to one and another of his acquaintances, seeking a position in a bank, mercantile house, or garden, but nowhere was an opening to be found. When it seemed as if the quest were ended, Mr. Roby turned to his companion with the remark, "I have still one friend who employs many men, to whom I can apply, provided you are willing to go into a nursery garden."

"Go?" replied Robert. "I would go anywhere and do anything for which I may have ability."

By a strange coincidence, which made it seem afterwards as if an unseen Power were directing the course of the young Scotchman, Mr. James Smith of Dukinfield was in the city that day and readily consented to give him employment in his nursery garden. James Smith was himself a Scotchman who had come to England many years before and established a prosperous business in the suburbs of Manchester. It was agreed that Robert should start to work at the beginning of the new year, and Mr. Smith drove home that night with a sense of satisfaction that he had found so promising a workman, but with a curious feeling of uneasiness when he thought of the comely young Scotchman with his great ambition, and then of his own blue-eyed Mary, the pride of his heart and the idol of his home. "We are safe for the present," said he to himself with a whimsical smile, "for the missionary society has refused him." Thus saying, he turned into the lane and saw the gleam of the lamp that Mary had lighted for his home-coming.

By the series of events narrated, Robert Moffat

had been led from the cottage at Carronshore to the stone house at Dukinfield, there to meet the supreme test of his love and loyalty. It was deep winter, with its frosts and snows and "cauld blasts," when first he came to that hospitable home whose friendly fireside welcomed many an interesting guest from near and far. Though Mr. Smith was a staunch non-conformist and his wife belonged to the Church of England, they were united in sincere devotion to the cause of Christ and opened their home freely to preachers and missionaries who came to the neighborhood. Their only daughter, Mary, was a girl of radiant energy, whose strong personality deeply influenced the social life of her home and community. She had an ease of manner and a readiness of speech which sometimes disconcerted the bashful young Scotchman, who was glad, nevertheless, to seek her society whenever occasion permitted.

Mary Smith had spent her school-days in the little town of Fairfield, where the Moravians had built up an interesting settlement with a chapel and school at its heart. Thus, by a curious coincidence, Robert and Mary had been brought under the same potent influence, the one by the fireside

stories of his childhood, the other by her girlhood association with a people whose ideals have been such a dynamic in the history of the Christian church. In both cases the contact was determinative of their futures. At the Moravian School Mary Smith had come to think no career on earth quite so desirable as that of a missionary. So firmly did this idea fasten itself upon her mind, that subsequently, at a meeting in Manchester, she whispered a prayer that God would send her as a missionary, perhaps to South Africa, if he so willed it. In like manner, Robert Moffat's purpose had its origin in the tales of the Moravian heroes which his mother loved to tell.

By the time the daffodils began to bloom in the fields and the scent of spring was in the air, life was becoming perilously sweet for the two young people at Dukinfield nursery. Across the hearth where the fire still burned brightly those cool spring evenings, the young man glanced furtively toward the girl, who sat by her work-table, her fingers flying nimbly over her work, her eyes sparkling with vivacity as she talked of this theme and that. Soon there followed that magic period of blossom and fragrance, quaintly called

the lilac tide, when, hand in hand, Robert and Mary strolled in the garden and in the wood back of the nursery, talking with unending interest of those years in the life of each when the other was yet a stranger and touching reverently upon their future, which as yet lay unrevealed. Upon the glory of that springtime, summer cast a disquieting shadow.

One day there arrived at Dukinfield a message of startling import. Robert Moffat had been accepted by the London Missionary Society and was instructed to make ready for sailing within a few months for a country which should be designated after he came down to London. Mr. Roby had persuaded the directors to accept his "bonnie laddie," as he called him, who might not possess a college degree, but who had within him the stuff out of which missionary heroes are made.

The great dream of Robert's life had come true, but oh, what a storm of conflict its realization brought! He wished to take Mary Smith with him as his beloved bride, and she said it would be "worth a thousand lives" to go, but with one accord her father and mother declared she should never go with their consent. She was too frail

to endure the rigorous life of a pioneer, "the diet hard and the blanket on the ground." Moreover, how could two lonely people face old age with their only daughter "ten thousand mile" away in an inaccessible wilderness? There were the three boys, to be sure, but what son could take the place of a daughter like Mary? In those days it was like saying a lifelong farewell to go as a missionary, for few went and fewer returned. Yet Robert must go and Mary must stay, and God alone could nerve them for the sacrifice.

With a heavy but resolute heart Robert left Dukinfield to lodge in Manchester near Mr. Roby, who was giving him final instructions before he should go down to London to receive his appointment from the missionary society. On September 13, 1816, having said the last good-bys up in the little cottage in Scotland and, hardest of all, in the dear old house at Dukinfield, he took the coach which bore him away from the associations he loved best in life, down over the long road which led at last to London. "Oh, that I had a thousand lives and a thousand bodies!" wrote Robert Moffat to his parents after visiting the London museum, where the idols worshiped in China, Africa,

and the South Seas were exhibited. "All of them should be devoted to no other employment but to preach Christ to those degraded, despised, yet beloved mortals. I have not repented in becoming a missionary, and, should I die in the march and never enter the field of battle, all would be well."

On the last day of September a farewell service was held in Surrey Chapel for the nine young men who were to be dedicated to the unfinished task which Jesus Christ began. It had been proposed that John Williams and Robert Moffat should be sent to Polynesia, but a Scotch minister interposed, saying, "Thae twa lads are ower young to gang thegither." Thus John Williams went to the South Seas, to become in later years the first martyr of Erromanga, and Robert Moffat—we shall see what befell him and what he achieved in the mysterious regions of South Africa.

It was the middle of October before the little party of missionaries embarked at Gravesend on the ship *Alacrity*, a name which became a mockery before the tedious voyage of eighty-six days was over. In the Downs the pilot-boat turned back,

bringing those last precious letters from the outbound ship up to a little family group in Scotland and to a brave-hearted girl at the Dukinfield nursery. For her, that autumn was gray with loneliness and poignant with the sting of associations which the old familiar places forever suggested. Every spot was memory-haunted, the lane, the fireside, and the garden walks. Those empty places where Robert was wont to be, how they brought the dull ache to her heart and the quiver to her lips! In God's infinite compassion would he some time bring together, across the widening distance, two young lives which belonged side by side?

CHAPTER IV

THE KRAAL OF AFRIKANER THE OUTLAW

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart;
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

—*Rudyard Kipling.*

"THE MAN MOST TALKED ABOUT AND MOST FEARED IN ALL AFRICA."

IV

THE KRAAL OF AFRIKANER THE OUTLAW

"BUT the servants, where are the servants?" inquired a firm young voice.

"Servants? What do you mean?" was the gruff reply.

"I mean the Hottentots, of whom I see so many on your farm."

"Hottentots!" cried the farmer with a sneer. "Do you mean that, then? Let me go to the mountains and call the baboons, if you want a congregation of that sort. Or stop, I have it; my sons, call the dogs that lie in front of the door; they will do."

Supper was over in the comfortable Boer homestead in South Africa, where Robert Moffat was stopping for a night's hospitality on his way from the coast to the interior. The farmer, upon hearing that he was a missionary, had proposed that he hold a service for the family at the close of the evening meal. The big Bible and psalm-book had just been produced when he electrified the com-

pany by asking for the Hottentot slaves. Seeing that his request was unpopular, Robert ceased to press it and quietly began the service. After the psalm had been sung, he led in prayer and then opened his Bible to the story of the Syrophenician woman and read. His voice was clear and vibrant as he came to the words, "Yea, Lord, for even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." He went on to speak, but presently the voice of the old man, his host, interrupted: "If Mynheer will sit down and wait a little, he shall have the Hottentots." The order was given, and the strange brown figures came trooping in, half dazed at the novel experience of being inside their master's house and listening to a religious service. After his arrival in Cape Town in January, Robert Moffat had been detained several months awaiting permission from the government to locate beyond the boundaries of Cape Colony. During this time he had lived in the family of a Dutch farmer and learned to speak the language, an acquisition which served him well in situations like the present. When the service was over and the Hottentots had scattered to their quarters, the farmer turned to his guest and said, "My friend,

you took a hard hammer, and you have broken a hard head."

On the morrow Robert resumed his journey, which had begun in Cape Town and was to terminate in the sandy, sunburnt wilderness north of the Orange River in the kraal, or village, of Afrikaner, the outlaw. As he approached the borders of Cape Colony, signs of habitation decreased, the Boer homesteads became fewer and farther apart, and the great isolation beyond the frontier of British rule cast its shadow before. Whenever he stopped for a night's rest at the lonely Dutch farmhouses, he listened to grisly descriptions of the fate he was sure to meet at the hands of that desperado, Afrikaner.

"He will set you up for a mark for his boys to shoot at," declared one farmer with sinister emphasis.

"He will strip off your skin and make a drum of it to dance to," said another.

"He will make a drinking cup of your skull," predicted a third.

"Had you been an old man, it would have been nothing," bewailed a motherly dame, wiping the tears from her eyes, "for you would soon have

died, whether or no; but you are young and going to be a prey to that monster."

Robert Moffat listened to these gruesome predictions with a whimsical smile upon his lips, but with some misgiving in his heart, nevertheless.

Now this Afrikaner was a notorious outlaw, as desperate and high-handed as were the Doones of England or Black Roderick of Scotland. His very name was a bogy to women and children and a living terror to strong men. In every village there was a "trembling lest he should pay them a visit."

There had been a time, in the changing history of South Africa, when the proud Afrikaner family roamed at will over their native hills and plains within one hundred miles of Cape Town. The flocks and the game were theirs, the pastures and streams were their undisputed possession, and their wild songs mingled with the winds which swept over Witsemberg and Winterhoek mountains, once the strongholds of their clan. But the white man had already obtained a footing in the country, and the old story of usurpation and extermination had begun. In 1652, Dutch settlers, expelled from South America, landed in South

Africa and founded Cape Town. As their numbers increased, they encroached upon the domains of the native tribes, sometimes seizing whole districts and forcing the poor Hottentots into flight toward the wilderness, or else into slavery on the Dutch plantations. Jager Afrikaner, the eldest son, who had succeeded to the chieftainship, became, with his depleted clan, the vassals of a Dutch farmer who knew neither sense nor mercy in dealing with his high-spirited victims. Insult and cruelty were heaped upon them, until, provoked beyond endurance, they rebelled, murdered the farmer, and escaped, with the remnant of their tribe, to the banks of the Orange River, where they defied approach.

From that day Afrikaner became the menace not only of the colony on the south, but also of the native tribes on the north. A price was put upon his head by the Cape government. Commandos were sent out for his capture, but he shrewdly resisted them all. A chief in Great Namaqualand ceded his dominion to Afrikaner, so that he ruled by right as well as conquest. Inborn sagacity directed his tactics of warfare, which were almost invariably successful, though

the odds were ten to one. On one occasion, a hostile chief, bribed by the Dutch farmers to trap Afrikaner, carried off every ox and cow belonging to him, leaving only a few calves in the stall. Afrikaner coolly plotted a swift and thorough revenge. He met his enemy in battle and for a whole day fought doggedly with the larger army, recovering his cattle once and again, only to lose them as often. Toward night he led his small band of followers back to their kraal, where they killed the remaining calves and rested two days while the flesh was drying in the sun. Having thus secured their provisions, they set forth, stole warily along the northern bank of the Orange River, located the enemy on the opposite shore by means of spies, and proceeded to a point beyond their encampment. In the dead of night they swam across stream, clothes and ammunition tied on their heads, guns on their shoulders. By this stratagem they came upon the enemy from an unexpected direction, flung stones upon their huts to rouse them from sleep, shot swift arrows upon them as they came tumbling out, and before the startled warriors could recover their senses, fired such a volley of musketry upon them that they

believed themselves attacked by an armed host and fled in confusion, leaving the stolen cattle, and their own as well, in Afrikaner's possession.

Titus Afrikaner, a younger brother, surpassed even the chief himself in fearlessness and ferocity. In the middle of the night he would take his gun, plunge into a deep pool in the river, swim to a rock just above the water, and there sit awaiting the approach of a hippopotamus, which he would shoot at the precise moment that the creature opened his great jaws to swallow him. He would smile deliberately when a lion lay dead at his feet. Once only did he admit the entrance of anything resembling fear into his life. For hours he had been struggling to wrest a herd of cattle from the possession of his enemy. The cattle themselves, together with the bushes, formed a screen which hid the two combatants from each other. Suddenly a movement among the herd made an opening through which each man saw his foe. Rifles were leveled, and fingers pressed the triggers. Just then a cow walked in between the fighters and two balls lodged simultaneously in her body, killing her instantly. Had it not been for this uncanny interposition, both

men would have been killed, for they were deadly marksmen. In after years Robert Moffat alluded to this incident, which he had heard from both parties, and spoke of the direct way God had intervened to save the two lives. Titus Afrikaner replied, "Mynheer knows how to use the only hammer which can make my hard heart feel."

Such was the dreaded tribe of Afrikaner, to whose kraal the directors of the London Missionary Society were sending their new missionary, Robert Moffat. The dread was mitigated in his case, however, because he believed, as the Dutch farmers did not, the almost incredible story of Afrikaner's conversion to the Christian religion. In 1806 English missionaries had crossed the Orange River and settled at a place perilously near the kraal of Afrikaner, the outlaw. Not long after their arrival, they were astounded to see the chief himself approaching and to hear his frank greeting, "As you are sent by the English, I welcome you to the country; for, though I hate the Dutch, my former oppressors, I love the English, for I have always heard that they are the friends of the poor black man."

From the first, Afrikaner seemed to be im-

pressed with the sincerity of the two Albrecht brothers, the pioneer missionaries in this region. He sent his children to them for instruction, and, when he heard they were planning to remove to another locality, he sent repeated messages and finally came in person to beg them not to go away. On several occasions Afrikaner and his tribesmen were attentive listeners while the missionaries, in broken Dutch, tried to explain the simplest meanings of the religion of Jesus Christ. Friendly relations were growing steadily, when the tribes living at the station of Warmbad became frightened and jealous and forced Afrikaner to withdraw to his own kraal. Subsequently misunderstandings and quarrels sprang up among the tribes. Afrikaner returned to his old career of pillage and bloodshed, while the missionaries lived in hourly terror of his attack, hiding for a week in a hole dug in the ground, covered by the tilt-sail of the wagon as shield from the burning sun. In the end they were compelled to flee for safety, while Afrikaner and his men plundered and burned the mission property and, in the midst of their ravages, met with the weirdest adventure which ever befell an African savage on the war-path. An

attendant of the chief had wandered into the tiny burying-ground. Stepping over a mound which seemed to be a newly covered grave, he stood still in horror, for from the depths of the earth beneath his feet came forth tones of music clear and unmistakable. Were the dead preparing to rise from the grave, as the missionaries had said they would? Not waiting for the apparition to appear he ran swiftly to the camp of Afrikaner, his chief. Now Afrikaner had no fear of living or dead, so he summoned his followers and sped to the spot. One and another jumped upon the mound, and louder and clearer sounded the sepulchral music. They took their spades, uncovered the earth, and there in the dry soil, where, but for this rude disturbance, it might have lain safely hidden until the return of the missionaries, was Mrs. Albrecht's piano, brought all the way from London. Curious fingers dissected the instrument, fragments of which helped tell the half-comic, half-pathetic tale to Robert Moffat when he reached Afrikaner's kraal several years later.

In course of time Christian Albrecht returned to the Namaqua region, though both his wife and his brother had died from the hardships

they had suffered there. At a spot south of the river, called Pella, a place of refuge, he reestablished the mission and there worked and prayed for the conversion of Afrikaner, his enemy. Just before he left the country to go again to the Cape, where he died shortly after, he had the joy of reconciliation with Afrikaner and the assurance that the outlaw chief was ready to listen to a message of peace and good-will quite contrary to his life of plunder and bloodshed.

Because he had faith in this story of Afrikaner's readiness to hear the gospel, Robert Moffat journeyed to the famous kraal with more of hopefulness than misgiving tinging his expectations. But all speculations regarding his welcome at Afrikaner's kraal were soon forgotten in the events of the journey itself, which was every day becoming more of a problem and a peril.

At Bysondermeid Robert parted from Mr. and Mrs. Kitchingham, who had been his companions all the way from England. In a native cart drawn by several yoke of oxen, accompanied by three native servants, he set out across an unbroken desert, a real missionary on the real trail at last! The first night they jolted through such

deep sand that the oxen lay down exhausted in the yoke before they reached that goal of every day's journey—water.

The next day they resumed the trek, as the Boers call a cross-country journey, and reached the spot where a fountain or spring was supposed to be, to find not a drop of water! It was evident that they would die of thirst if they continued in that direction, so at the suggestion of the native guide they swerved northward and faced a barren desert where not a blade of green grass and scarcely a bush were to be seen. Toward night men and beasts were again prostrated with thirst and heat and dropped upon the sand, which was still hot from the noonday sun. Thirst awakened the men at break of day and drove them to the nearest mountain upon a frantic search for water. After digging and digging in the loose sand, they came upon a trickling stream of dirty water, like the bilge water of an old ship. Men and oxen drank greedily and were ready for a second draught before they had secured enough to go around and to fill the small vessels they had brought with them. When they started to go back to the wagons, the sun was high in the sky,

and the sand was like a red-hot stove. The oxen went wild and ran until they came to a slightly hardened bit of sand, where they crowded together, trying to cool their hoofs in the shade of their own bodies, those on the outside struggling to get into the center. At last the merciless sun went down, and they began to yoke the oxen for another journey by night, when to their consternation they found that most of the herd had run away toward Bysondermeid. A man was sent in pursuit, but at midnight he returned to report that lions and thirst compelled him to give up the search. A perilous situation it was! Not a moment was to be lost. At once Robert dispatched two of the men with the remaining oxen to the next fountain, instructing them to go on to Pella and secure assistance from Mr. Bartlett, the missionary there.

For three days Robert and his wagon-driver waited on that glaring, sun-baked desert. Not a single human being nor beast of prey appeared in sight, although in the night the roar of lions sounded from the mountain where they went twice a day for water. Tufts of dry grass supplied the fire for cooking their food, but, alas, there was

little food to cook! Hunger, thirst, heat, and the sight of that monstrous desolation seemed enough to drive one mad! They were just beginning to fear that the men they had sent for help were lost or dead, when three shapes appeared on the horizon, drew nearer and nearer, and at length resolved themselves into Mr. Bartlett and two men on horseback, with huge flanks of mutton fastened to their saddles. Never did a hungry boy look upon a Thanksgiving dinner with such real thanksgiving in his heart as did Robert upon that mutton, though it was killed but the evening before. Mr. Bartlett, who was inured to African temperature, declared that the heat Robert had endured was enough to set the grass on fire.

After fresh oxen, accustomed to deep sand, arrived, they journeyed on to Pella, well named "a place of refuge." Here our young missionary found the rest and encouragement he needed in the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Bartlett and the native Christians. As he was making ready for a fresh start northward, the native teacher from Warmbad, named Magerman, came to Pella to beg and implore the new missionary to locate in his village. It was difficult to resist his entreaties,

but Robert Moffat was honor bound, so he told him to go first to Afrikaner's kraal, because the directors in London had promised Afrikaner a missionary. At last Magerman consented to escort him across the Orange River, but warily chose a ford opposite Warmbad, hoping the villagers would come and take him by force to be their missionary.

At the river bank rafts were made of dry willow logs, six feet long, tied together with the inner bark of the mimosa tree. It was a task of several days to transport wagon and contents piecemeal across the stream, which at this point was five hundred yards wide and perilous with rocks and swift current. As the moment approached when Robert was to cross, he slipped away down the wooded bank and plunged into the water, preferring his own strong strokes to the slippery raft. As he swam toward the center where the current was swiftest, the onlookers became alarmed and dispatched expert swimmers to overtake him, but this they tried in vain to do. He had barely reached the opposite shore when a man came running toward him, exclaiming breathlessly, "Were you born in the great sea water?"

No sooner had the wagon and its contents been landed in a place of safety beyond the reach of sudden floods, before Robert Moffat was fairly mobbed by a crowd of excited people who claimed him as their missionary. The next day entreaties were renewed with such force, that it was afternoon before he could snatch a bite to eat. As a climax, the women came *en masse,* declaring that if he went away from Warmbad he would have to go over their dead bodies, for they would lie down before the wheels of his wagon. Again and again he told them he was in duty bound to go to Afrikaner, because the promise had been given. The long parley was brought to an abrupt end by the arrival of a band of men from Afrikaner's kraal, led by three brothers of the chief and sent as an escort for the missionary. The poor, disappointed people of Warmbad scattered in dismay, for who would dare oppose the will of the Afrikaners?

On January 26, 1818, four months from the time he left Cape Town, and more than a year since he sailed from England, Robert Moffat came to the goal of his journey, the kraal of Afrikaner, the outlaw. As his wagon creaked into the village of huts shaded by the mimosa trees, the

chief's brother led it to a large tree some distance from the hut of Mr. Ebner, a missionary who had already come to the kraal, and who was to be Robert's associate. Robert was considerably puzzled by this move, but waited quietly to see what would happen next, his uneasiness increasing in proportion to the chief's delay in coming to greet him. It was an exciting moment for Robert Moffat, the dramatic climax of all his adventures, when, after an hour of suspense, he stood in the presence of Afrikaner, the man most talked about and most feared in all South Africa. "Two strong men stood face to face" in that moment, and they had come literally "from the ends of the earth," in experience as well as geography, to meet in this African wilderness where the mettle of each was to be tested.

"Are you the missionary appointed by the directors of London?" inquired the chief after the usual salutation. Upon receiving an affirmative reply, he looked pleased and said, "You are young; I hope you will live long with me and my people." He then turned and gave orders for a number of women to attend upon him. As soon as they appeared with their bundles of native

mats and long sticks, he pointed to a spot of ground and said, "There you must build a house for the missionary." A circle was formed, poles were thrust into the ground and tied down, straw mats were stretched over them and fastened and lo! in the space of half an hour the missionary's house was complete. No door, no window, no chimney, a flimsy protection of sticks and straws from sun, rain, and wind, and from hungry dogs and serpents, but home for he knew not how long!

A real missionary in a real African hut with a real "ten thousand mile" between him and the stone house at the end of the lane in Dukinfield! Was it a wild hope conjured out of his great need, that some day the fair daughter of that house would leave her English home and come to dwell with a lonely missionary in a far-away African kraal? What then would isolation and hardship matter, compared with the peace his heart would know in her presence?

CHAPTER V

"TWO STRONG MEN STAND FACE TO FACE"

And it came to pass . . . that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

—1 Samuel xviii. 1.

"WITH A FEELING OF UTTER DESOLATION, ROBERT WATCHED THE OX-WAGON DISAPPEAR IN THE DESERT."

V

"TWO STRONG MEN STAND FACE TO FACE"

Awake, my soul, in joyful lays
To sing the great Redeemer's praise.

A BOYISH voice sang the words to the accompaniment of a violin, while the granite rocks caught the tones and tossed fragments of song into the village of huts in the valley below. The evening glow fell upon the singer, who leaned against a huge boulder as he sang and played his violin. It was a brave song out of the depths of a brave young heart which needed all the solace his mother's favorite hymn could give. As his Master went alone to the mountains and desert places of Judea to pray, so Robert Moffat was wont to go to the barren, rocky places above the African kraal to think and pray, and sometimes to break into victorious song. His daily problems were so heavy and his prospects so black, that he was prone to wonder if "he had

run unsent" or if God had surely guided him to this forsaken spot in the wilderness. But as his thoughts trailed back over the long journey and the experiences which had befallen him in England, he felt sure that at every turn he had heard the still, small voice saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it."

In Afrikaner's kraal the missionaries found themselves in sorry plight. Every day brought fresh hints of impending disaster. "My inexperienced hand trembled to touch a single chord," wrote Robert Moffat afterwards, "lest it should vibrate in sounds more discordant than those which fell on my ear the preceding day." The chief, now called Christian Afrikaner, treated the missionaries with icy reserve, while Titus, his brother, was an open enemy of all missionaries and of Mr. Ebner in particular. Taking his stand before his hut, while the whole village flocked to the scene, he hurled the most insulting language at the missionary and ordered him to leave the place on penalty of physical violence. In distress, Robert Moffat went to the chief and besought him, as a fellow Christian, to stop the disorderly conduct of his brother. He appeared curiously

unwilling to take part in the affair, though promising to prevent a personal assault upon the missionary. Robert then drew Mr. Ebner aside and begged him not to try to argue with a man so crazed with rage. As a last resort he ventured to speak to Titus himself, asking him to refer the matter to the chief. "I hope *you* will not interfere," replied Titus calmly. His only recourse then was to sit down before Mr. Ebner's hut to protect the wife and children, should Titus resort to blows.

It was almost sundown before the savage fury of Titus spent itself and he moved away, obdurate and sulky. Later in the evening Mr. Ebner came to Robert and asked him to assume entire charge of the mission, as he had resolved to leave the country. Seeing that he was unduly excited, Robert urged him to wait a few days before deciding finally. Meanwhile, he approached Titus Afrikaner and drew from him something like a promise not to molest the missionary again. Even with this assurance the decision of Mr. Ebner could not be altered, and Robert saw his only missionary companions making ready to depart. The exit was made in fear lest Titus should attack

them beyond the village limits, for rumor had it that, but for Robert Moffat's presence, a second attack would have been made then and there. With a feeling of utter desolation, Robert watched the ox-wagon creep out between the rocks and disappear in the desert, leaving him alone with Afrikaner and his tribe!

Was it strange that he withdrew to the rocky outskirts of the village to pray for strength to carry the burdens of the day? For a man not yet twenty-three years of age, the responsibility was appalling! The people were suspicious and jealous by nature, and their wild life had accentuated these traits until they became ruling passions. The best of them had been described as "sharp thorns." The land upon which their kraal was built was barren and unfruitful, yielding no grain and little prospect of any, because of scarcity of water for irrigation. There was no way of sending to the Cape for supplies, and, even if there had been, Robert had no money with which to buy them, for his meager salary of twenty-five pounds a year admitted no extras. Out of this maze of difficulties Robert Moffat found the clue which was to lead him into friendly relations with the

people, and, before long, to the happiest of surprises.

He began the usual work of a pioneer missionary, conducting religious services morning and evening and teaching the children three or four hours during the day. His school became quickly popular and numbered a hundred or more children who came clad in their dirty *karosses,* or outer garments, of sheepskin. It was not long before his daily services were attended by no less a person than the chief himself, who came with unfailing regularity. Afrikaner had never been proficient in reading, but he now applied himself to the task with the zest of a boy who has discovered the most interesting pursuit of his life. He would read his Testament hours at a time, sitting in the shade of a great rock, or else in his hut, unperturbed by the presence of his family or strangers. Many a night he sat on a stone outside the missionary's hut, talking with his new friend until daybreak upon such themes as the creation of the world, the redemption of mankind, and the wonders of the heavenly life. Often, in the exact language of the Bible, he would repeat passages he had

studied during the day and failed to understand. There was no end to the questions his inquiring mind could ask, philosophical questions about endless space and infinite duration and the creative power of God as exhibited in earth and sky. Long and weighty were the discussions, until he would rub his hands upon his head and exclaim with childlike simplicity, "I have heard enough; I feel as if my head were too small, as if it would swell with these great subjects."

While Christian Afrikaner was thus discovering new worlds to conquer, Titus was fighting a new kind of battle with himself as enemy. Somehow the missionary's influence had penetrated even his stormy life and set up a counter storm which drove through his life with cleansing force. Robert Moffat had made repeated advances to Titus Afrikaner, speaking to him about the vital concerns of his life in soft and gentle tones, such as the African savage had seldom heard. Gradually he showed signs of relenting, until he too came to the daily services and often sat long into the night listening silently to the conversation between his brother and the missionary. He who had been the implacable enemy now became the

staunch friend of the Christian missionary, though he was not ready yet to acknowledge himself a follower of the missionary's Christ. He said his head had become too hard with sin. "I hear what you say, and I think I sometimes understand, but my heart will not feel."

Now Titus Afrikaner was the only influential man in the place who had two wives, and the example was pernicious. Robert Moffat had tactfully led up to the subject on several occasions, but Titus was unmoved, though willing to admit that a man with two wives had no enviable lot. "He is often in an uproar," he declared, "and when they quarrel he does not know whose part to take." One day he came to the missionary's hut leading an ox, upon which rode one of his wives. "What is the matter?" inquired Robert as he greeted his guest. Shaking hands and laughing, Titus replied, "Just the old thing over again. Mynheer must not laugh too much at me, for I am now in for it." The two wives had quarreled, and one had flung a rotten stick with such force that it struck the other's hand and left a piece an inch long imbedded in the palm. The hand had swollen to four times its normal size. "Why

did you not bring her sooner?" asked the missionary. "She was afraid to see you and would not come till I assured her you were a *maak mensche* (tame man)." Robert made an incision and removed the splinter, whereupon the woman wept with gratitude and listened meekly while he pleaded with her to live a better life.

One day Robert was sitting in the presence of the chief, when, in a fit of absent-mindedness, he looked steadily into the black face before him. Afrikaner modestly asked the reason for this searching scrutiny. "I was trying to picture to myself your carrying fire and sword through the country," answered Robert. "I could not think how eyes like yours could smile at human woe." For answer the once bloodthirsty chief cried like a child.

Every day gave fresh evidence of the reality of Afrikaner's conversion. He was not the man to do things by halves. As he once went the whole length of evil, he was now going the whole length of goodness. He joined the missionary in a crusade for cleanliness and industry in the dirty, lazy kraal. Chief and missionary stood together at the fountain, superintending the school children,

one hundred and twenty in number, as they took the first real baths of their lives. The two reformers persevered in argument and entreaty until the children actually washed their sheepskin *karosses,* no easy task to perform since the skins were untanned and sewed together with sinews of animals, besides being stiff with dirt. Wherever there was poverty or distress in the region, there Afrikaner went with help and sympathy, though from his spoils of many years he had but little left to give. He who had once been a firebrand among the tribes now became their peacemaker. When he could have lifted his arm and dared the contending tribes to draw a bow, he would stand between them as suppliant, imploring them to make up the quarrel without bloodshed. Alluding to his past life, he would say, "What have I now of all the battles I have fought and all the cattle I took, but shame and remorse?"

Without the generosity of the Afrikaners, life would have gone unduly hard with Robert Moffat, for food was scarce in that arid region. A gift of two cows from the chief saved him many a hungry night, while the clever marksmanship of Titus Afrikaner brought him the elusive game. His

food consisted wholly of milk and meat, first one and then the other, occasionally both at once and sometimes neither. "The diet hard and the blanket on the ground" were but the cross to be joyfully borne for this "youthful, sinewy pioneer," who had "sprung to his place" in God's great vanguard of workers!

CHAPTER VI

THE GIPSY LIFE OF AN AFRICAN TRAVELER

I refuse to acknowledge that there is anything I ought to do which I cannot do.—*Mary Porter Gamewell.*

"AFRIKANER SMILED APPRECIATIVELY AT THE WORDS WHICH HE CAUGHT."

VI

THE GIPSY LIFE OF AN AFRICAN TRAVELER

SOMETHING unusual was going on in Afrikaner's kraal, for the people were all gathered in one spot, intently watching. In the center of the circle was a fire, and over the fire was bending a young man struggling with a pair of bellows made of goatskin. The open ends of the bag-shaped skins he had nailed to a circular piece of board, in which he had fastened a valve. Connecting the other end with the fire and placing a weight on it to force out the wind, he drew out the valve, when, to the delight of the onlookers, a steady current of air rushed through. With a blue granite stone for an anvil, a hammer, and a clumsy pair of tongs, he set to work in dead earnest to weld the iron bands to mend his broken-down wagon, which was in demand for a journey. The tension of his face relaxed as he watched the success of an experiment upon which grave issues depended. This was the first time in his life that

Robert Moffat had undertaken work which properly belonged to an experienced smith, but a pioneer life sharpens the inventive faculty to the utmost ingenuity.

Afrikaner and his people were planning a difficult expedition into the wilderness, and their missionary was to accompany them. For his sake, as well as for the transport of game, an ox-wagon was a necessity. His own wagon was the only one the village could boast, and it was decrepit from its long journey from Cape Town. There was no smith in the place and no possibility of moving the wagon to Pella, where the work could have been done. The expedition must be made, the wagon must go, and by some device or other Robert must mend its broken joints. So he improvised bellows and tools, welded the iron, and the wagon was as good as new. Gun-locks were also repaired at the missionary's forge, and on a day in June the expedition was equipped and ready to start.

For some time there had been talk of migration to a more fertile territory. So little rain fell in their present location and the fountain was so inadequate for irrigation that even the grass with-

ered and died. Most of the men took their cattle and went forth in search of pasturage. Neither man nor beast could find sustenance from that parched soil, and to locate a permanent mission there would be sheer folly. Hence it came about that thirty men set forth to explore the country on the borders of Damaraland to the north, where, it was said, the fountains never ran dry.

Their route led first over endless stretches of sand, plains of sand, hills of sand, all caused by the granite formations. Ironstone, quartz, and occasionally copper were to be found in this strange region, where strata ran up and down and across and sometimes in a straight line from one hill to another. Zebras, giraffes, elks, and antelopes formed a moving panorama on the desolate background. Flesh of zebras and giraffes constituted the principal diet of the travelers. It was cut in thin pieces and dried on the bushes in the sun, while the expedition halted. When it was kept long, it became like leather and had to be heated in the ashes and pounded between stones to loosen the fibers. Robert Moffat finished many a meal with jaw so sore from excessive chewing that he could barely speak. When there was

nothing at all to eat, he would bind his stomach with a thong, which the travelers whimsically called the "fasting girdle." Once when food was scarce, they found honey in the crevices of the rocks and ate it with relish, thinking they had made a lucky discovery. Presently one after another complained of a burning sensation in his throat, until all were afflicted with the same fiery malady. A native who appeared on the scene told them the honey was poisoned by the *euphorbia* flowers from which the bees had extracted it. The results were unpleasant, but not disastrous.

Later on in the journey they met with an adventure which haunted the memory of one of the travelers forever after. For an entire day they had pushed their way through the hot sand without a drop of water to drink. All night they tossed restlessly with thirst and exhaustion. Early in the morning Robert arose and, with a single companion, started on ahead to see if he could trace his way to a pool of water by following the footprints of animals. They passed beyond a barrier of hills and saw in the distance a tiny thread of smoke rising from a clump of bushes. It was a sign of human life, which surely betokened the

presence of water, and they quickened their pace. When they had come within a hundred yards of the place, they stopped excitedly, for the foot-prints were those of a lion which must have passed that way but an hour before. The men had no guns, for they were too tired to carry them, but thirst conquered fear, and they pressed on, casting wary glances at every bush. They reached the spot and found neither lion nor water, but an old, old woman, a veritable skeleton, who sat with her head resting upon her hands in abject weakness. Terrified by the sudden appearance of two men, one of them a white man, she tried to rise but fell back trembling to the ground. Calling her by the name best loved the world over, Robert Moffat tried to allay her fear.

"My mother, fear not; we are friends and will do you no harm. How do you come to be in this situation?"

After a time she made answer: "I have been here four days; my children have left me here to die."

"Your children!" exclaimed the white man in horror.

"Yes," said she, "my own children, three sons

and two daughters; they are gone," pointing with her bony finger, "to yonder blue mountain and have left me to die."

"And pray, why did they leave you?"

"I am old," said she, stretching out her hands. "I am no longer able to serve them; when they kill game, I am too feeble to help in carrying home the flesh; I am not able to gather wood to make fire, and I cannot carry their children on my back as I used to do."

These last words were more than the white man could endure, and he wept, even while his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth from thirst. Just then the wagon came creaking along and the woman cowered in fear, thinking it was an animal. Robert reassured her and proposed to lift her into the wagon and take her with them. At the very suggestion she shook with fright. The same thing would be done over again if they took her away and left her in another village, so she said. "It is our custom; I am nearly dead; I do not want to die again."

The sun was now high and fiercely hot; the oxen were stamping in their yokes; the men were almost delirious. They must move on in search

of water, so they collected some sticks for a fire, left dry meat and a knife and, promising to return in two days, went on their way. After a long ride past a series of rocky hills they came at last to a stagnant pool of muddy water into which men and oxen plunged frantically.

In two days they retraced their course, according to their promise, but they found the old woman gone and every vestige of a human presence removed save the footprints of two men. Several months later, Robert Moffat learned from the lips of a wandering tribesman that from "yonder blue mountain" the sons had seen the wagon stop and thought the travelers were looking upon their mother's dead body. Going down to see, they found her alive and eager to tell the story of the strangers' kindness. Fearing the vengeance of the great chief, as they took the white man to be, they carried her home and cared for her with unusual solicitude during the rest of her life.

One night around the camp-fire Robert talked with his black companions about this terrible custom, saying that men who could do such things were as bad as lions. "They are worse," declared Afrikaner and proceeded to describe the

lion's habit of giving right of way to the older beast. When an old lion, hunting with younger lions, his "children," as the Africans naively call them, comes upon game, he makes the onslaught while the others crouch on the grass near by. After he has killed his prey, he withdraws for a breathing spell, while they wait and watch. After a rest of some fifteen minutes he begins to feast, retiring a second time to rest and advancing a second time to eat, before the younger lions offer to take their turn. Even when a young lion captures the prey himself, he gives way in favor of an old lion, if one chances upon the scene. "The lions have better manners than the Namaquas," reiterated Afrikaner.

Two months slipped away before the travelers returned to Afrikaner's kraal, weary and disappointed, but dauntless still. They had not succeeded in finding a suitable location for the mission because in that arid region there was none to find. The expedition had been valuable for demonstrating that fact alone. Before many weeks passed, Afrikaner was ready with another plan, involving an even more hazardous journey for the missionary.

Meanwhile, Robert Moffat found outlet for his energies itinerating among the Namaqua villages near and far. When, at the close of a hot day, he came with his interpreter to a cluster of huts, the black people would gather, perhaps in a corner of the fold among the kine, and listen to the story that the white man always loved to tell, because he knew its power to heal and help. On these tours he rode a real horse instead of an ox with sharp horns, upon which the rider might be impaled. Titus Afrikaner had given him this horse. It was the only one he possessed and was invaluable for hunting, but nothing was too good for his friend, the missionary.

In September the second exploring party was ready to start. Griqua Town, several hundred miles eastward, was the destination. The Griqua chiefs had offered Afrikaner a settlement in their territory, and he was sending this advance force to reconnoiter and report. The chief did not go in person, but he sent David and Simon, his brothers, Jonker, his son, and a guide, to accompany the missionary. Eight horses, good, bad, and indifferent, and a sheepskin blanket apiece made up the equipment of the party.

Brightly colored birds without the gift of song, baboons, hyenas, panthers, and lions were the only living creatures that they met in the wilderness. Mimosa bushes with thorns like fish-hooks and deep chasms walled in with steep precipices were the natural obstacles to progress. Once, unwittingly, the missionary drank water which the little Bushmen had poisoned to trap game. Once, on a cold night, having covered the tired horses with the sheepskin *karosses,* he dug a hole in the sand and buried himself, all but his head. He had the best sleep of the journey that night. Once, as they were fording a stream at twilight, a hippopotamus gave chase, snorting so loudly that the precipices sent back the echoes. On another occasion their guide lost the path, and they encamped for the night without water, only to find in the morning that they had been led by an invisible Guide to escape the deadly peril of lions. Worst of all, they were nearly three days without food and nearly two days without water, arriving at Griqua Town totally unable to speak and making known by signs their desperate need of water.

From Griqua Town they went fifty miles north to Daniel's Kuil and as far again to Lattakoo, a

mission station on the Kuruman River, among the Bechuana tribes. Little did Robert Moffat dream at that time that the Bechuana people and the Kuruman mission were to be vitally connected with his life and that of another.

In October they returned to make report to Afrikaner and to give heartfelt thanks to God for their safe home-coming after the terrible hazards of the journey. Removal to Griqualand was deferred for the present, and work was resumed on the old site, where drought and hunger pressed sore, but the Bread of Life had renewed power to sustain. Never before had the people shown such affection for their missionary, though they little realized his aching need of human sympathy. For a secret grief, unsuspected by his black neighbors, Robert required the infinite solace of the gospel that he preached,—required and obtained it day by day. Had they known the contents of a certain English letter which reached him on a black day in November, their simple minds would have devised new ways of expressing the love they felt.

For their sakes, as well as for his own physical necessities, Robert Moffat conceived a plan for a

third expedition which involved perils and possibilities altogether unique. He proposed that Afrikaner should go with him to Cape Town. It was imperative that Robert's tattered wardrobe should be replenished; even more imperative was it that the mission should be relocated on a more strategic site. Both these needs could be met in Cape Town. When he broached the subject to Afrikaner, the chief stared in blank amazement. "I had thought you loved me, and do you advise me to go to the government to be hung up as a spectacle of public justice? Do you not know that I am an outlaw, and that one thousand rix-dollars have been offered for this poor head?" But Robert had visions of great things to be accomplished by Afrikaner's visit to the Colony, and his enthusiasm inspired his black companion. "I shall deliberate," said Afrikaner thoughtfully, "and commit my way unto the Lord; I know he will not leave me."

The question weighed heavily upon chief and people. For three days they deliberated; then they came to a solemn decision. Afrikaner was to go. It was upon the young missionary that the burden of responsibility fell, but he was sure he

was doing right and that God would carry him through unscathed to his destination and to final victory.

As a precaution for travel through the territory of the Dutch farmers, Robert assumed the rôle of chief and Afrikaner that of servant. There was nothing, however, in the apparel of either to denote the presence of a chieftain. Robert had exactly two substantial shirts left, and one of them he gave to Afrikaner, who donned in addition a pair of leather trousers, a time-worn duffel jacket and an old hat of nondescript hue. The missionary's garb was scarcely more presentable, but what could be expected after fifteen months of roughing it in the most stubborn wilderness of the world?

As they crossed the borders of Cape Colony, concern deepened in Robert Moffat's mind. How would the Dutch farmers treat Afrikaner, should they chance to discover his identity? They were obliged to stop for water at the scattered farms along their route, and Robert found again the hospitable welcome which the Boers customarily accorded to strangers. When they recognized him, they exclaimed in amazement, saying they had

heard he was murdered by Afrikaner. When he tried to tell them of Afrikaner's transformed life, they seemed to think his mind deranged.

One day he came to a house where he had met with marked kindness on his inland journey. The farmer came down the hill upon which the house was built, to greet the stranger, and Robert put out his hand saying he was glad to see him again. The farmer thrust his hand behind him and asked rather distractedly, "Who are you?"

"I am Moffat, have you forgotten me?"

"Moffat!" he stammered. "It is your ghost. Don't come near me," and he retreated several steps. "You have been long murdered by Afrikaner." "But I am no ghost," protested Robert, feeling his hands to testify his flesh and blood reality.

"Everybody says you were murdered," parleyed the farmer. "A man told me he had seen your bones."

For several minutes he stared at the youthful figure before him; then he bravely put out his hand saying, "When did you rise from the dead?" Thinking that his wife would be alarmed at his appearance, they walked down the hill toward the

wagon talking, as they went, about Afrikaner, that human bugbear of the farmers.

"He is now a truly good man," affirmed Robert, after recounting the facts of his conversion and transformed life.

"I can believe almost anything you say," replied the farmer, "but that I cannot credit; there are seven wonders in the world; that would be the eighth."

By that time they were close to Afrikaner himself, who smiled appreciatively at the words that he caught.

"Well," concluded the farmer, "if what you assert respecting that man be true, I have only one wish, and that is, to see him before I die; and when you return, as sure as the sun is over our heads, I will go with you to see him, though he killed my uncle."

The last announcement was rather startling, but, knowing the good nature of the farmer, Robert decided to run the risk and grant him his wish on the spot.

"This, then, is Afrikaner," said he.

The farmer drew back and stared at him as if

he had dropped from the sky. "Are you Afrikaner?" he asked.

Afrikaner arose, doffed his old hat and bowed politely, saying, "I am." The farmer gazed at him with awe as the chief stood meek as a lamb before him. Lifting up his eyes he said reverently, "O God, what a miracle of thy power! What cannot thy grace accomplish!"

In April, 1819, Robert Moffat and Christian Afrikaner guided their ox-cart into Cape Town, having made the trip from Great Namaqualand in two months. His excellency the governor, Lord Charles Somerset, appointed an hour wherein to receive the famous outlaw, whose arrival he could scarcely credit. It was an interesting situation when Afrikaner stood in the presence of the English governor, the man who had refused permission to Robert Moffat, upon his landing in Cape Town, to go as a missionary beyond the borders of the Colony. He now saw before him in Christian Afrikaner living evidence of the value of the enterprise which he had once questioned. He received him with marked kindness and, as token of good-will, presented him with a fine, new wagon worth at least eighty pounds. It so hap-

pened, in the irony of human events, that before Afrikaner left Cape Town the one hundred pounds sterling once offered as reward for his capture was expended by the government in gifts for himself and his people.

The presence of Afrikaner created no small stir in Cape Town, for his lawless adventures had been the common theme for twenty years. The gentleness of his bearing and his accurate knowledge of the Bible made a profound impression. His New Testament, which bore the thumb-marks of constant usage, was touching evidence of sincerity. The missionary had indeed proved his case by producing this witness whose very life testified mightily to the redemptive power of Jesus Christ.

That same unfailing power had been tested in the missionary's own life the last five months, though none but himself saw the fight or knew when the victory came. The struggle began when that sad letter found its way to him in Afrikaner's kraal. In that letter Mary Smith had told him she would never, never be able to go to Africa to work by his side, because her father had for the last time refused his permission. Again it

was the old cry, he must go—across the veld and the burning sand of Africa—and she must stay —far away in bonny England with "ten thousand mile" between!

CHAPTER VII

THE VICTORY OF LOVE

It takes great love to stir a human heart
To live beyond the others and apart,
Love that can wound love, for its higher need:
Love that can leave love, though the heart may bleed:
Love that can lose love, family, and friend,
Yet steadfastly live, loving to the end.

endurance test had outlasted two winters, stern and unremitting. Would her strength hold out for a third and a fourth winter, perhaps for a lifetime of bleak, shivery winters, when all the while her heart was craving the warmth and sunshine of summer? It was two years ago this very month since Robert had sailed away from England. In that first void of separation Mary had been buoyed by the hope of joining him some day in Africa. It was her unceasing prayer that this hope might be fulfilled. She gloried in the thought of going to him, knowing he could not in honor return to her. But that prospect had dimmed steadily before her eyes as her parents grew more and more unwilling to let her go. She could scarcely listen to a sermon concerning God's readiness to answer prayer without breaking down and sobbing, so disheartened had she become. Would he not answer her prayer and grant her heart's desire?

Last winter had brought the final decision, and she had written to Robert renouncing their cherished hope of reunion in Africa. If it had been excruciating to write that letter, it was more excruciating to think of his receiving it. She

could even see the mute suffering upon his face as he read those cruel sentences she had written, oh, so unwillingly. If only she could have been there to soothe the hurt she herself inflicted! In her own life there had been times when it seemed as if she must die of the wound she bore. But what was the endurance test allotted to her in the outskirts of busy Manchester, compared with that set for him in an African kraal with an ox-cart, and with six hundred miles of desert between him and civilization! In his primitive surroundings there would arise every day problems of living such as a man could hardly solve without a woman's help. Was it right for her to fail him in his great need? Mary had always believed her love for Robert was God's call not merely to the "ordinary human bliss," but to the companionship of a great purpose and a great endeavor. Was she not doing wrong to resist that irresistible call? "Impelled by feelings I cannot master, held back by a tie I dare not break." It was the old dilemma magnified a hundred times by her yearning to see again the boyish curve of his cheek, to touch with caressing, reverent fingers the locks of his dark hair. What

wonder that the last rays of the sun that October afternoon fell aslant a girlish head, buried in abandon of grief upon the little work-table, her sewing lying in a tumbled heap on the floor!

The illusion of summer cast by the hazy, October days passed into the grim reality of winter. The days grew shorter and the nights longer, spreading twilight over the land before the day's work was done. Bleak winds and gusts of snow drove men and beasts to shelter. One December evening James Smith and his wife were sitting before the fire talking in low, grave tones. Mary had just left them to go to her room, and the house was still with a strange sense of expectancy. The firelight flickered upon the two gray heads and caught the frightened, wistful look upon their faces. They had climbed "the hill thegither" and now "they maun totter down, hand in hand," leaning harder upon each other and harder still upon God, for Mary, their precious child, was going out from the stone house at Dukinfield across the seas to Africa, perhaps never to come home again. There before the fire they had fought their battle through to victory,—those God-fearing parents. No longer would they

withhold Mary from the life God had appointed her to live.

A few days ago two letters had come from Robert, letters which had been seven and eight months on the way. When the father and mother listened to those letters, straight from Afrikaner's kraal, their eyes were opened, and they saw with clear vision the destitute, ill-fed, pathetically lonely life they had doomed Robert to live without Mary. Had they a right to keep those two apart when together each could work twice as effectively for the black people of Africa, "the strength of two being felt in each one's power?" It was God who was calling this child to his work. Dare they refuse him? No, a thousand times no, even though a sword pierced their own souls. It was a kind of annunciation which came to this father and mother, the seal of God upon the life of their child. In days to come they too would sing a *Magnificat* because a child of theirs had been chosen "to go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways."

Christmas that year brought the gift of gifts into the family life at Dukinfield, the gift of victorious love. For Mary the rebound of joy was

almost too wonderful to endure. Love came into its own and wrought an excitement of spirit as riotous as spring, and as transforming. There were no neutral tints in her life to match the winter landscape. Life was all color, movement, intensity, but with a storm-cloud of suffering on the horizon. The bliss of going to Robert was already shadowed with the dread of leaving home. Marriage for Robert Moffat and Mary Smith involved sacrifices beyond the common lot of young lovers, but the measure of loss was less than the measure of gain in the love they bore each other and the Leader they followed.

The great news was already on its slow way to South Africa, where by this time Robert must have received the other letter saying that Mary could never come. How could she wait six or eight months for these opposite tidings to reach him! From the African hut where she pictured Robert her thoughts sped to a little stone cottage in Scotland where lived another father and mother whom she had never seen, but toward whom her heart went out in yearning. To ease her mind she sat down and wrote a letter to Robert's parents:

Manchester, December 16, 1818.

My dear Friends:

Doubtless you will be surprised to be addressed thus by an entire stranger, but, though personally unknown, you are dear to me for the sake of your beloved son Robert. If you have received a letter from him lately, you will perhaps know in what relation I stand to him; but, as I think it very probable that your letter may have miscarried, I cannot but feel deeply anxious that you should know of his welfare. I received letters from him about ten days ago, dated April and May, 1818, in the former of which he states that he sent by the same opportunity a letter for you and also one for my father, but as this has never come to hand I fear that yours also may have met with some delay, if it is not entirely lost.

It is not only the probability of this circumstance which induces me to write to you, but also a desire to communicate to you that, after two years and a half of the most painful anxiety, I have, through the tender mercy of God, obtained permission of my parents to proceed some time next spring to join your dear son in his arduous work. This is what I by no means expected a week ago, but God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. When he arises, every mountain flows down at his presence. He has the hearts of all men in his hands and can turn them as the rivers of water. So he has done with regard to my parents. Previous to the arrival of these last letters, my father had persisted in saying that I should never have his consent; my dear mother has uniformly asserted that it would break her heart (as I have no sister, and she is far advanced in life); notwithstanding all this, they both yesterday calmly

resigned me into the hands of the Lord, declaring they durst no longer withhold me.

The idea of parting forever with my beloved family appears almost too much for myself. Sometimes I think I shall never get launched on the ocean before grief weighs me down; but such are my convictions of duty, that I believe, were I to remain here another year, it would then be out of my power to go, for I must sink under the weight of an accusing conscience, when I consider Robert's peculiarly trying situation and the strong affection which he seems to bear to me.

The dawn of the new year brought to Mary Smith an unparalleled expectancy. Before its course was run, what mighty changes would be wrought for her and for those she loved! Preparations were begun in earnest, for at the first suitable opportunity Mary was to sail for South Africa. In those days no weekly mail boat sped with unfailing regularity from Southampton to Cape Town in sixteen days. Only an occasional sailing vessel put out to sea on uncertain dates for the voyage of three months to the Cape. In those tense days of waiting and preparing, parents and children drew very near to one another. Only the great realities of life stood out, the petty concerns dwindling into insignificance. The three boys, William, John, and James, came under their

sister's influence, and John publicly avowed his allegiance to the Master she served. Thus was another prayer answered, for Mary had longed to have this brother committed to the Christian life before she left the country. Sharing her purpose, he could more effectively minister to their father and mother in her absence.

The yellow broom set the hills "aglow with golden light" on the day Mary Smith said goodby to her Chester home. The green hedges and greener fields, the thatched villages and manor-houses buried in shrubbery, never seemed half so fair as on the summer day that she and her father set forth for London. The coach swung around a curve, giving one last glimpse of smoky Manchester, one last agonizing look in the direction where, behind the smoke and the trees, stood the stone house in which a white-faced mother went bravely about her daily work. Then on and on they went through large towns and tiny hamlets, drawing up with lordly flourish at roadside inns and at last, with dignified pace, entering the great city which lies at the end of every Britisher's dream—London.

In the early nineteenth century he who would

cross the seas must needs learn the lesson of patient waiting. Mary Smith learned her lesson well before she left London to go to the ship. Days lengthened into weeks, until her father could stay no longer and started on his lonely way back to Dukinfield. Mary was left alone in the great city, cherishing her precious memories of the past and facing her unknown, adventurous future. New-found friends in Islington could hardly do enough to prove their sympathy with the brave-hearted girl. Her almost daily solace was the long letter she wrote home, revealing the terrible clash between her affection for her parents and her longing, intensified by a high sense of duty, to serve God in Africa with the man whom she loved. One of these letters reads as follows:

London, August 13, 1819.

My dear Mother:

I have sent you a small token of affection. I thought it would be better calculated to communicate pleasure and comfort to your heart than any article of dress. As for having my portrait taken, I cannot now, as my father is leaving and I should have to pay for it myself; and that you know would not do. Whatever I possess now I must husband well, remembering that I am now supported more peculiarly out of the sacred treasury. Oh, may I ever keep this in mind and be a

faithful steward! Oh, my dear mother, do be happy, as you value my peace of mind, the honor of religion, and my credit in the world! Do not let me be reflected upon for want of affection to the best of mothers. You know it is not want of affection. Oh, do not allow the world to think so! Let us prove to the world that our blessed religion has power to soothe us under every distress.

It was the last of August when Mary set forth from London to go down to Gosport, near the port of sailing. For two weeks she lingered there, a guest in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Bogue. One morning in September the captain's summons was received, and Mary Smith, with her two missionary companions, went on board the *British Colony,* in whose cramped quarters they must remain until they stepped upon the shore of Africa. At noon the ship sailed out of the harbor at West Cowes for the long, long voyage. It was about a week later that an unexpected letter reached the family group at Dukinfield to add a touch of gladness to their saddened thoughts.

Gosport, September 15, 1819.

My dear Madam:

After having had your lovely and interesting daughter an inmate in our family, and enjoying an opportunity of cultivating her character and beholding her unfeigned and exalted

piety and zeal, I cannot but feel deeply for you and Mr. Smith on being called to part with her to such a distance. Great must have been the trial, the conflict must have been severe; all the parental feelings must have risen up in direct opposition to her plans and wishes. The sacrifice you have made of them is great, but not too great for him who gave up himself for you. "The best child is not too good for God." He gave her to you and he has demanded her back again, and he can and will be better to you than ten such daughters, lovely and excellent as she is. His gracious presence can more than supply hers, and, if he withdraws the nether springs, he can make the upper springs to overflow and abound. He has highly honored you in giving you such a daughter, and by calling her to fill such a high post on earth as that of a Christian missionary, the highest she could fill. . . .

While with us Miss Smith was in excellent health and spirits, looked well and was cheerful and in a very happy and suitable frame of mind. She sailed last Thursday and is, we suppose, by this time safely across the Bay of Biscay, as the wind has been favorable.

Your truly sympathizing friend,
Charlotte Bogue.

Far out to sea the *British Colony* pursued her slow, uneven course. When the wind was favorable, she made four or five miles an hour; when the wind was contrary, one mile; and when the wind ceased altogether, she lay becalmed, rolling from side to side with that slow, sickening mo-

tion every traveler abhors. Below deck, pigs, ducks, and geese added their din to the general discord which prevailed among passengers and crew. There was a perpetual scene of wrangling, varied on two occasions by the captain's display of authority, when he stamped about like a madman, giving orders here and there, and threatening to blow out the brains of one of the offenders. Mary Smith wished fervently for a squall, that he might have something to take up his mind. Mary had managed to keep aloof from the contention on board, though by nature she was quick and outspoken. The honor of her cause was at stake in her conduct and she carried herself with discreet self-control.

In 1819 no one would have chosen an ocean voyage for resting tired nerves or reviving a faded interest in life. It was a straight test of endurance, in which only the fittest survived without damage to health or disposition. Of all the passengers on board the *British Colony* none came through in such excellent health and spirits as Mary. Her fellow passengers pronounced her the one person on board best fitted in body and mind for the rugged life of the interior. And

yet she had suffered many a day with headache, and many a night had her pillow been drenched with tears as she thought and dreamed of home.

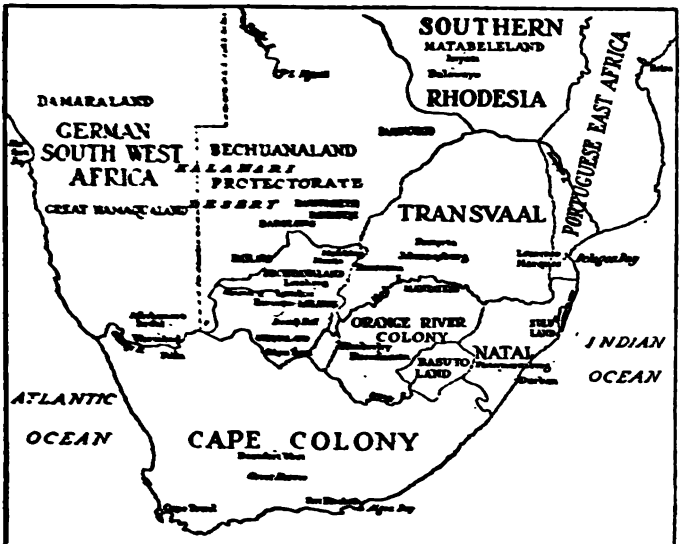
"Water, water everywhere" for four, eight, ten, twelve weeks, and then early one morning the thrilling cry of "Land!" That cry aroused varied emotions in the minds of the travelers: for some, reunion with old and dear friends; for others, the chance to make or redeem the fortunes of life; and for one and all, relief from prolonged discomfort on shipboard. But was there one among them who felt such inward agitation, half dread, half ecstasy, as Mary Smith felt, as she watched that gray strip on the horizon take on the irregular contour of land? Was she in some fantastic dream, from which she would suddenly awaken to find herself back in the familiar scenes of Dukinfield? Or was this the reality and her whole past life the dream? She felt as if she were hovering on the margin of life, when either past or future might slip from her grasp, leaving her a stranded, forgotten spirit in a realm unknown. She was separated by a great ocean from her people at home. When and where would she find the one to whom she had entrusted her future?

Presently Table Mountain emerged from the indistinct mass, its huge, square bulk looming against the sky. At its sides arose in sharp outlines the two peaks, Lion's Head and Devil's Peak, and at its base gleamed the white houses of Cape Town. As the ship entered the harbor, friends came eagerly on board to greet the new arrivals. Mary scanned each face for the one she longed to see. But no, he was not there! A strange man was coming toward her as if to give her welcome. Who could he be? What did it mean? And where, where was Robert?

CHAPTER VIII

A HONEYMOON IN AN OX-CART

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past;
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.
—*The Song of Solomon, ii. 10-12.*



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THE MOFFATS

VIII

A HONEYMOON IN AN OX-CART

WHEN Afrikaner made ready to go home from Cape Town, it was with heavy heart, because his missionary must be left behind in the Colony. Though he had the good-will of the government in the shape of substantial presents and, more especially, in a passport to insure kindly treatment from the Dutch farmers, yet he dreaded to go back to his people in their lonely kraal without the white man they loved so well. The white man had other claims laid upon him, and in those claims Afrikaner acquiesced with the unselfishness of a real Christian.

In April, 1819, when Robert Moffat and Afrikaner arrived in Cape Town, they found there two men who had been sent by the London Missionary Society in England to investigate the condition of the scattered mission stations in South Africa. The men were John Campbell, an intrepid explorer who had already made one trip

into the interior of Africa, and Dr. Philip, who was to remain in Cape Town as the permanent representative of the Society. After meeting Robert Moffat and hearing the story of his work in Great Namaqualand, especially after seeing the living result of that work in Christian Afrikaner, they concluded that he should be sent to a larger and more promising field among the Bechuana tribes on the Kuruman River. When they broached the subject to Robert, he was dumfounded, for he had fully expected to return with Afrikaner. He had even bought supplies on the way to the Cape which he intended taking with him on the return trip. On no account would he agree to the proposal until he had conferred with Afrikaner and secured his approval. The African chief, however, was not to be outdone in sagacity or magnanimity. Like the general he was, he recognized the strategy of placing the missionary among a people larger in numbers and more advantageously located than his own small tribe upon its sandy plains. Like the Christian he was, he gave up his missionary, that other needy tribes might share the blessings of his presence. With the instinct of a leader who

provides for the future of his followers, he planned with Mr. Moffat how he might some time remove his tribe to the Kuruman River, as the Bechuanas, with whom he had traded, had often invited him to do. At any rate he would take his new ox-cart, the gift of the governor, and transport the books, furniture, and cattle which the missionary had left in his kraal to Lattakoo, the new home in Bechuanaland. With these hopes of reunion the two friends parted, each with a void in his heart for the brother who had gone his separate way.

In the meantime a still more difficult decision was required of Robert Moffat. Dr. Philip and Mr. Campbell were planning a trip to the eastern part of the Colony and north into Kaffraria, to visit old stations and prospect for new sites. They urged Robert to go with them, on the plea that his experience as an African traveler and missionary would lessen the difficulties of the undertaking. A predicament it surely was for Robert! Four days after reaching Cape Town he had received the letter from England which in a flash turned his world of sober gray into color and sunshine, with laughter and songs ringing in

his ears. Mary's letter had traveled swiftly to its owner, winged perhaps by the buoyancy of its message, hastened, at any rate, in its delivery by Robert's timely arrival in Cape Town. She was coming, coming, the girl he loved and had renounced for duty's sake, coming to be his bride, his lifelong companion, coming all that long, perilous way, and, if he should go on the trip to Kaffraria, he would be far away in the interior when her ship came to port. Could he commit to others the priceless privilege of welcoming Mary? Every instinct of his being cried "No, no," but somewhere from the depths within came a stern, imperious little voice which said "Yes," with a finality not to be gainsaid. In a home letter written about this time appeared these few significant words:

"On these accounts nothing could have excited me to take this journey but a sense of my duty which I owe to him in whose service I am engaged. Dr. Philip and Mr. Campbell laid before me the valuable aid my service would render them on their important tour. I consider this a sufficient cause to take up my cross and to follow Jesus. This is my comfort, that the Lord is her refuge, and she will find numerous affectionate friends in the Cape who will receive her with open arms."

The touring party set forth and proceeded successfully until Bethelsdorp was reached, when it was learned that war with the Kafirs had broken out and entrance into their country was prohibited. There was nothing to do but return to Cape Town, and, to Robert's unspeakable delight, he was there in time. The ship was not yet due in port! God had found his servant, like Abraham of old, willing to obey, and in return for that willingness had given him back the very joy he had renounced.

Curiosity ran high in Cape Town whenever a British ship was sighted at the entrance to Table Bay. What news would she bring from the great world? What interesting cargoes? What letters from home or from travelers afar? Perhaps the very travelers themselves! Many there were who hurried down to the pier that eventful day in December when the *British Colony* came to port, but, strange to relate, Robert Moffat was not among them. As the time approached, he was so violently shaken by the storm of feeling within him that he dared not risk a greeting on board ship amid a crowd of curious onlookers. No, his first meeting with Mary must be in some quiet

place where there would be no need of commonplaces or disguises to hide the emotion they felt. Consequently he sent his friend Mr. Melville to the ship to meet Mary and escort her ashore, while he waited at home, consumed by impatience such as only a young lover knows. The months and years of waiting crowded these last moments with an intensity almost suffocating.

It was shortly after one o'clock when steps were heard outside, and a voice dearer than all the music of earth sounded in Robert's ears. The door opened and Mary stood before him, as fresh and sweet as if she had just stepped out of a Cheshire garden on a spring morning. With one broken cry he clasped her in his arms, and the welcome she received that day was worth all the tiresome weeks at sea, all the homesickness and the peril and the long suspense.

Two days later a ship sailing home to England carried a joint letter from Robert and Mary to the father and mother at Dukinfield. A portion of Mary's letter ran thus:

> Having parted from you all, my affection felt weaned from this world; and, there being an uncertainty whether, on my arrival here, my dear friend would be alive, I felt prepared

for anything. But oh, my cup of happiness seems almost full! Here I have found him all that my heart could desire, except his being almost worn out with anxiety, and his very look makes my heart ache. Our worthy friend, Mr. Melville, met me on board and conducted me to his house, where a scene took place such as I never wish to experience again. We have received each other from the Lord and are happy. . . .

Robert will conclude this letter, and I will write very soon more particularly; my time is now expired and I can say no more. But, mother, be happy, and praise God on my account.

Robert's conclusion read in part as follows:

Dear Father and Mother:

I can now with more reason than in my former letter address you with the endearing title of parents. It would be in vain for me to call to mind the different scenes through which I have passed, but more particularly what I felt when the sound of your beloved daughter's arrival had reached me. It was to me nothing less than life from the dead. My prayers answered, the promises which had long been my refuge were now fulfilled. My prayers in that respect are now turned to praise, and surely never in my life has the hand of God been so singularly manifested for good.

Mary, my own dear Mary, is now far distant from a land endeared to her, being the place which gave her birth, and which still contains a circle of friends who are entwined round her heart, but more especially endeared as the residence of you, dearer than all besides. She is now separated from those

scenes and from you, but let this comfort you, that, although in a land of strangers, she is under the care of our ever-present God, and united to one who speaks as he feels when he promises to be father, mother, and husband to Mary, and will never forget the sacrifice you have made in committing to his future care your only daughter.

On the twenty-first of December Robert Moffat celebrated his twenty-fourth birthday. Then followed Christmas with its drift of memories. A year ago there had been for Robert no hope of Mary's coming; a year ago for Mary the great hope had just been reborn. And now the miracle of reunion had come to pass, and they were facing the new year together! The crowning event of that anniversary week took place two days later, when, on the twenty-seventh of December, in St. George's Church, Cape Town, Robert Moffat and Mary Smith were married. Dr. Philip took the place of father to the girl whose own father was six thousand miles away, while the Melvilles opened their house for the wedding company, which in the ordinary course of events would have assembled in the stone house at Dukinfield. Though so far from home on that day of days, there shone in the faces of the bridal pair

an ineffable happiness such as comes only from human love made divine by sacrifice.

Early in the new year three ox-wagons stood ready for the wedding journey of seven hundred miles to Lattakoo. One was a transport wagon for conveying luggage: the other two were passenger wagons of the usual type, resembling somewhat the prairie schooner of the North American frontier, though much larger. The typical African ox-cart was about fifteen feet long and five feet wide, with wheels several feet in diameter, bound by massive iron rims. The sides were made of boards, and a circular framework covered with canvas formed the top. At the front and back hung canvas curtains, to be raised or lowered at the whim of the travelers or the vagaries of the weather. The interior revealed unexpected recesses to the unwary passenger. In a section at the rear, fastened at either side, were two beds, called *kartels,* consisting of wooden frames and mattresses. In front was space for such tasks as could be performed while the springless cart jerked and bumped over the road.

To Robert and Mr. Campbell the ox-wagon was an old story, for already they had trekked hun-

dreds of miles across the African veld. But for Mary, the cart, the oxen, and the "crew" of black men had the zest of novelty. When Robert had helped his wife into their cart and Mr. Campbell had climbed into his, the drivers lashed their long whips, the leader boys grasped the thongs fastened to the horns of the foremost oxen, the *screwfer* boys released the brakes, and the caravan moved on its way.

When Cape Town was left behind, they jolted through fertile valleys and lovely mountain scenery, making about fifteen miles a day, the speed limit of an African ox-cart. In due time they came to that curious desert upland known as the Karroo, where, as Mr. Campbell said, they must needs put on their spectacles to espy a blade of grass; where every plant save the mimosa had a bluish-yellow color from the saltpeter. Here for ten days they passed but one solitary house, though meeting a number of wagons journeying from the interior to the coast. It was a gipsy-like experience; on the road for the coolest hours of the day, then outspanning—as unhitching is usually called in South Africa—for a meal and a rest. When it was excessively hot, perhaps

ninety-six degrees in the shade, they traveled by night and rested by day. At each halt the crew gathered fuel and placed the three-legged iron pot over the fire.

"I like wagon traveling better than I expected," wrote Mary Moffat to her parents. "It is not so fatiguing. I have had none of those hardships which I looked for. Our table is generally well spread, better than we shall look for when we are poor missionaries; this is partly owing to Mr. Campbell's being with us, and partly to Robert's being well known in the country and receiving liberal presents."

To his parents Robert wrote in this vein:

"I am happy to say that Mary stands the journey amazingly well; she takes everything as she finds it and encounters with ease what you would term difficulties. She has several times asserted that she never enjoyed better health than she has since she came to Africa. Nay, I am sometimes astonished to see her possessed of such good spirits at times when human nature is spent, for we have our hardships."

For Robert and Mary it was an enchanted land of youth and love through which they were traveling. They had but to look into each other's

tanned and sunburnt faces to become as children faring forth hand in hand on one of childhood's great adventures in playland. The tug was yet to come, but with childhood's faith in God and each other, what need had they for fear?

Half-way across the Karroo they came to an embryo town, now Beaufort West, then a settlement of six houses with a missionary and a *landdrost,* or magistrate, already in residence. The latter, a Scotchman, Mr. Baird by name, called upon the travelers as soon as they had outspanned, inviting them to his house for meals so long as they should stay. When they left, he furnished them with guides to lead the way through the tangled passes of the Bushman country. On the very day of departure two men and some twenty or thirty oxen were seen approaching from the southeast. They had come from Bethelsdorp, leading the oxen which Mr. Campbell and his party had left there the year before upon their hasty retreat to Cape Town. A message had been sent to Bethelsdorp asking that the oxen be brought to Beaufort West on such a date, but with the uncertainties of African travel the timely arrival seemed provi-

dential. A day later and the party would have been gone!

Seven weeks had passed when the travelers came at last to the Orange River, that stream which flows a thousand miles across continent, rising near the Indian Ocean on the east and falling into the Atlantic on the west. They had trekked six hundred miles over the very route which to-day can be traversed in two days by train from Cape Town. Happily for them the river was low, and in the space of half an hour oxen, wagons, and passengers were safely across. A year before, at this very season, a woman missionary spent nine weeks waiting on the shore and another week in crossing, the rain falling in such wild torrents that she could not tell whether the wagon was in the stream or out of it. The vagaries of this river were destined to be well known to Robert and Mary Moffat before their African travels were over.

Four days later they came to Griqua Town, an interesting missionary settlement founded in the year 1804 by Mr. Anderson and Mr. Kramer. Here Robert was on familiar ground, the scene of his tragic adventure a year and a half before,

when he stumbled into Mr. Anderson's house, half-crazed with thirst and hunger, having been three days without food. How changed were the circumstances of his second entry into Griqua Town!

Thus far the inland journey had been a venture of faith, because, for the second time, the colonial governor had vetoed Robert Moffat's plans for settling in the interior. He had insisted that Robert become a government missionary in Kaffraria, and because he declined, the governor tried to force his acceptance by barring the way to Lattakoo. Notwithstanding this obstacle, Mr. Campbell was bent on making the trip, and it seemed expedient for the Moffats to accompany him, trusting that the ban would be lifted before they reached the journey's end.

Beyond Griqua Town they trekked by long stages from one fountain to the next, outspanning for the last time at the source of the Kuruman River, a great rock, cleft by some convulsion of past ages into mysterious caverns with bats overhead and subterranean passages beneath, along which the water could be heard rushing in torrents. From such a source one would expect

a river deep and tumultuous, but the Kuruman, alas, was but a shallow, meandering stream.

The soft, green landscape of England was haunting Mary Moffat's mind, as she neared her journey's end, suggested perhaps by the more fertile aspect of the region they were now entering. Here at last were a few scattered trees and, yes, cornfields and gardens, but nowhere in Africa, so she said, had she seen a wood equal to that above the Dukinfield nursery. Seven months it was since Mary had left her Cheshire home to travel, without a single disaster, seven thousand miles to Lattakoo, the very place which for six years had lured her with a charm irresistible. When John Campbell returned home from his first trip to Africa he had addressed a meeting in Manchester at which Mary Smith had been present. As he told the story of the needy black people in Bechuanaland, the girl had breathed the prayer, "Oh, that I might spend my days at Lattakoo!"

What a miracle had been wrought in the space of six brief years! At this very moment their ox-carts were creeping into the African village of Lattakoo, and Mr. Campbell himself was their

companion and guide. The crowning wonder shone in Mary's eyes as she glanced toward Robert and then toward the huts of straw and the black people who were swarming to greet them. They were coming home at last, Robert and Mary, husband and wife, home to the black man's kraal, where a God-given task awaited them.

CHAPTER IX

THE WAIT-A-BIT THORN

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
And make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;
If . . .

—*Rudyard Kipling*

"AT ALL HOURS OF THE DAY THEIR HUT WAS INVADED BY INQUISITIVE VISITORS."

IX

THE WAIT-A-BIT THORN.

THE village of Lattakoo, otherwise known as Mothibi's kraal, was protected from wild beasts by a closely-set hedge of brambles, a natural barricade equal to the barbed-wire fence for spitefulness. Stout, sharp thorns grew in dense array upon these bushes, shrewdly named the "wait-a-bit" thorns. Curiously enough, the wait-a-bit thorns became symbolic of the life of the brave Scotch pioneers whom they surrounded at Lattakoo. They had fallen into a tangle of hostility and misunderstanding, as prickly and impenetrable as the thorn hedge, and for days, months, even years, were made to wait for release. Ever since the first missionaries arrived in Lattakoo, the black chief and his people had kept them in the brambles of suspense. Both chief and people were like spoiled children clamoring perpetually for fresh toys to play with, and the newcomers were victims of their whims and caprices.

When John Campbell first visited the Batlap-

ing tribe of the Bechuana race, Mothibi, the chief, had said to him in all seriousness, "Send missionaries; I will be a father to them." Stirred by this promise and the prospect of thousands of people reached by the gospel message, Mr. Campbell had returned to England and pleaded for the mission at Lattakoo. In town and city his voice was heard in its moving appeal for the black people of Bechuanaland.

In the year 1815 four young men had responded to Mr. Campbell's call for recruits and set sail for South Africa under appointment of the London Missionary Society. Two of these men, Mr. Evans and Mr. Hamilton, trekked bravely over the road from Cape Town to Lattakoo, cheered on their way by thought of the welcome they would receive at the journey's end. One day in February their ox-carts drew up in the public square of Mothibi's village while the chief with a number of his followers came forward and shook hands. To their utter amazement Mothibi greeted them with the question, "What have you brought for barter?" The interpreter, who had accompanied them from Griqua Town, explained that these two men were the missionaries whom Mr.

Campbell had promised to send and Mothibi had promised to receive. At this announcement the chief's face grew stormy, and the subordinate chiefs who had gathered around muttered and gesticulated ominously. A disconcerting reception it was for men who had traveled seven thousand miles to answer the call of the heathen chief! Gifts of beads and other articles served to "sweeten the heart," as the Africans say, and again the interpreter alluded to the promise Mothibi had made.

"They may stay and help me fight," answered the chief warily, "but they want water, much water; there is no water; there are no trees; the people have customs and will not hear."

For two days Mothibi kept the missionaries waiting for his final verdict upon their case. One minute he declared they could stay, and the next that they must go. At last the matter was referred to a council of the people whom he bade "speak their minds."

"The missionaries must not come here," cried the people.

"The missionaries must not come here," echoed the chief.

Before they could yoke their oxen and escape, the villagers crowded around the cart begging noisily for gifts. A jeering mob chased them through an opening in the thorn hedge, shouting, "Away with the white people, away with the white people!"

Back to Griqua Town went Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Evans, "pursued, yet not forsaken; perplexed, yet not unto despair." There they waited and watched for further change in Mothibi's fickle mind. As the days went by, Mr. Evans became disheartened and returned to the Colony. Mr. Hamilton, with quiet determination, continued to wait, praying and believing that in time Mothibi would consent to receive him. Meanwhile he was obliged to go to the Cape for supplies, and upon his return with purchases made in the shops at Cape Town, the greedy Mothibi promptly changed his tactics and bade him come to Lattakoo.

Thus it came about that Mr. Hamilton had spent some four harassed years among the Batlapings at Lattakoo when Mr. Campbell and the Moffats came to relieve his loneliness. For several months Robert Moffat and his bride lived in one mud-walled, mud-floored room, while Mr.

Campbell made a venturesome journey to the Bahurutse tribe, two hundred miles to the northeast. When his work of prospecting was done and he was ready to return to the Cape, the Moffats also made preparations to depart, for they too were denied permission to remain at Lattakoo. This time it was not the heathen chief, Mothibi, who refused shelter to the missionaries, but the English governor at Cape Town who withheld his consent.

As they were busily packing for the journey, there crept into the village out of the west a strange ox-cart bearing the marks of long, hard travel. A tall, sinewy African, with the manner and bearing of a chieftain, alighted from the cart and inquired for the missionary, Mr. Moffat. A proud moment it was for Robert Moffat when he led Mary to the scene and presented to her his old friend Afrikaner. Yes, Afrikaner it surely was, who had come over the long trail from Great Namaqualand to fulfil the promise made to his missionary before they parted in Cape Town. Stowed away in the wagon were the books and furniture belonging to Mr. Moffat, and corralled near by were his oxen and sheep, the entire prop-

erty guarded and transported by the one-time bandit, Afrikaner. His arrival was another of those timely occurrences in which the watchful care of God could be traced, seeking to save his children disappointment and loss. A day or two later and the missionaries would have been gone down the southbound route to Griqua Town!

As it was, the little company set forth together, Afrikaner traveling with them as far as Daniel's Kuil, the half-way point. There he left them to pursue his lonely way across the desert, the return seeming far longer and harder without the anticipation which had lightened the outward journey. These were days of severed companionships, for the parting with Afrikaner was but the foreshadowing of another to take place at Griqua Town. There John Campbell would leave them to go on his way to Cape Town and thence home to old England. A delightful companion he had been through all the vicissitudes of African travel; beguiling the slow hours with his quaint touches of humor; ready always "to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Instinctively Robert and Mary drew closer to each other and closer yet into the covert of their

Father's love, under the buffetings of their pioneer life in Africa.

As the ox-carts came into the vicinity of Griqua Town, a messenger approached with a letter in his hand. It was a letter from the Colony saying that at last the governor had given permission for the Moffats to settle at Lattakoo. Free at last to make their home where they most desired,—but not free to return at once to the coveted spot! The Griqua mission was in troubled condition, and Robert was asked to remain for a time to help unravel the snarl of difficulties.

Robert and Mary had been married a twelvemonth when sorrow and joy in close succession visited their humble home at Griqua Town. The young wife was stricken with a terrible illness from which it was thought she could never recover. With white, tortured face her husband watched by her bedside trying to catch her broken messages of farewell. "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy cometh in the morning." Morning for them was the spring of the year, and joy was the return and the advent of life. When April flung its dazzling sunlight into the bare little room in the mission house, Mary Moffat held

in her arms a baby girl called by her own name. Did any guardian angel whisper to the father and mother aught of the wonderful destiny which awaited that tiny bit of girlhood far out in the years to come?

In May, 1821, the little family returned in their ox-cart to Lattakoo, there to begin housekeeping in their own home. Until Robert could build a comfortable house for his wife and child, they lived in an ordinary Bechuana hut, with the peaked roof and the sloping walls of straw. Into that primitive home, problems and perils fell like a rain of hailstones. At all hours of the day their hut was invaded by inquisitive visitors, who talked in loud tones or stretched out on the mud floor for a nap, and who seized warily any object which pleased their childish fancy. Sometimes the hut was crowded to suffocation, and the young wife held a prisoner in her own dwelling. Moreover, it was an African fashion to daub the body with grease and red ocher, so that everything the visitors touched, from the baby's clothes to the dinner table, was smeared in like manner. Many a day the Moffats postponed their dinner for hours in the hope that their greasy, red-hued

guests would depart. A vain hope it was, for the Bechuanas found much amusement in the customs of the foreigners. All efforts to keep the food and household articles clean were greeted with noisy laughter. The idea of using water for cleanliness was ludicrous, and the English mode of dress worse than senseless. "Why," said they, "should a person put his legs and arms into bags? Why use buttons to fasten clothes around one's body when they could just as well be suspended as ornaments from the neck or hair?" Why, in fact, be a serious-minded Englishman when it is so much easier to be an irresponsible African?

One day Mrs. Moffat found a native woman in her little outside kitchen and humbly asked her to leave, that she might close the room before going to church. For answer the woman seized a piece of wood to hurl at Mrs. Moffat's head. Needless to say she was left in undisputed possession of the kitchen and all it contained. On another occasion a native girl who was tending little Mary took offense at some reproof and flung the baby across the hut at its mother's head. Assuredly there was no humdrum about life in an African kraal.

Worst of all grievances that the missionaries had to endure was the universal native habit of stealing. A shrewd device was to wait until the missionaries had gone to the little church which Mr. Hamilton had built, then to thrust a black head within the door to discover who was in the pulpit, and knowing he could not leave for a given time, dart off to his hut to capture, mayhap, his dearest possessions. Knives, metal spoons, saws, and axes disappeared with magic swiftness, and their loss was keenly felt when the nearest shop was some hundred miles away. If the tools proved to be of unexpected metal, the thieves would bring them back beaten into all sorts of shapes and offer them in barter for other articles. Many a day when the missionary was working at a distance and no one was left at home, he would be obliged to carry every tool and kitchen utensil he valued, knowing well that they would otherwise be spirited away before his return.

Once Mr. Hamilton toiled for hours grinding corn between two millstones which turned by hand. From the meal thus secured he made a huge loaf of bread, which he calculated would last a week at least. Upon returning from

chapel in the evening he promised himself a feast of home-made bread, a feast which turned out to be but a mockery of anticipation, for a thief had forced open the one tiny window and made off with the precious loaf. More than once he returned home to find a stone left in the pot in place of the meat he had been cooking for dinner.

Whenever Mr. Hamilton and Robert Moffat met in the morning or evening, they recounted the losses of the day before. Once it was a tale about a fine draught ox killed in the cattle-fold, and the whole carcass, except one shoulder, carried away. Again it was an account of sheep with legs broken and tails cut off; sometimes, a flock reduced to half its rightful size. On other mornings it was a story of cattle driven into a bog, and the "accident," as it was called, reported too late to prevent some of the herd falling prey to hungry hyenas or hungrier natives. As Robert said, "We always had some tale to tell about our losses, but never about our gains, except those of patience and faith in the unchangeable purposes of God."

The sliest and most pernicious of all the thefts was perpetrated by the women, instigated by the chief's wife, Mahuto. They stole the one posses-

sion most essential to life, even the water supply which the missionaries at great labor had provided for themselves and their families. In the early days of the mission Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Read, who took Mr. Evans' place, toiled indefatigably to dig a ditch to carry water from the Kuruman River to the gardens which the chief had given them. In that light, sandy soil no vegetables would grow save by constant irrigation, and vegetables must be had to relieve that noxious diet of meat and milk. The watercourse led for some miles from the river across the plains and through the native gardens on its way to the missionaries' property. Perceiving the advantages of the plan, the women proceeded to cut openings in the ditch, thereby flooding their own gardens and depriving the missionaries even of the needed supply for cooking. Every afternoon at three o'clock, the hottest hour of the day, either Robert or Mr. Hamilton set forth, spade in hand, to close the outlets the women had opened, hoping their drooping gardens might be revived during the night. The women, meanwhile, were on the watch for the missionary's return from his three-mile tramp, whereupon they slipped out and opened

Photo. London Missionary Society

Photo. London Missionary Society

"THE SMOKE OF A THOUSAND VILLAGES"

WITHIN A BECHUANA KRAAL

the outlets that he had closed. For days the missionaries were left without a drop of water except what they carried from a fountain a long distance away. During those days the thermometer registered one hundred and twenty degrees in the shade! Remonstrance only brought worse disaster, for the women, like peevish children, rushed out to the dam where the water was diverted from the river and with their picks completely destroyed it, allowing the stream to flow undisturbed in its original bed.

Housekeeping in a Bechuana kraal was quite another story from what it was in the village where Mary Smith was born and bred. If you were an English girl in Africa, and if your neighbors hated you without cause, if stony hills and sandy plains wearied your eyes with their glare, if grass were the color of straw, and vegetables and cattle died of thirst, then would you sigh for the velvety green meadows of England, where the cows were sleek and fat and the flowers a riot of bloom, where life was clean and wholesome, and people were friendly to you? Would you rebel at your wretched fate and determine to break your fetters, or would you be wistful, per-

haps a trifle homesick, but hopeful, oh, sturdily hopeful, that some day a piece of green, friendly, Christian England might be transplanted into black, dismal Africa? But if you, a simple day laborer, should by your pains have made that transplanting possible, would you mind about the "labors and watchings and fastings" which once you had to endure?

CHAPTER X

BLACK BUGBEARS

I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die . . . for the name of the Lord Jesus.—*Saint Paul.*

"THERE ON THE FLOOR SAT HIS WIFE, SHAKING A MILK-SACK."

X

BLACK BUGBEARS

HELA KA RARE (Halloo, by my father), I thought you were making rain." An excited black man burst into the rain-maker's hut at Lattakoo, exclaiming in surprise at the sight which met his eyes. He had come to congratulate the rain-maker upon the success of his arts, and here he was sound asleep, totally unconscious of the shower which had just fallen upon the cracked and withered land. Where now was his boasted skill in producing rain, when he did not even know the rain had fallen?

Awaking from his untimely nap, the rain-maker saw at once the embarrassment of his position and looked about for means of explaining the situation. There on the floor sat his wife shaking a milk-sack to obtain a little butter for anointing her hair. Pointing to her, he said with ill-concealed triumph, "Do you not see my wife churning rain as fast as she can?" What a simple, adequate explanation! Through the village

sped the news, "the rain-maker has churned the shower out of a milk-sack." The very simplicity of the device increased the magic of the achievement in the minds of the gullible Africans.

For many months the region about Lattakoo had been a "dry and thirsty land where no water was." Scarcely a cloud appeared in the sky, and the sun shed a yellow, sickening glare upon a blighted world. Grass became as stubble. Seeds lay in the ground as they had fallen from the hand of the sower. For lack of pasturage the cows gave no milk and were slowly dying of hunger. Mere skeletons of human beings dragged themselves to the fields in search of unsavory roots and reptiles to preserve life. Endurance had reached the breaking-point when, in council assembled, the people resolved to send for the famous rain-maker who lived among the Bahurutse tribe two hundred miles to the northeast. His craft would break the evil spell of drought which had fastened upon the land. Swift messengers were despatched with orders not to return without the rain-maker. When the allotted time for the journey elapsed and the messengers did not return, rumor had it that they were murdered.

Then black gloom settled upon the people of Lattakoo, while the burning sunshine fell relentlessly upon their tousled heads.

One day a great shout was raised, and the whole village tumbled out in commotion. The rain-maker was coming and had sent a forerunner to bid the people prepare for his entry by washing their feet. One and all, old and young, sick and well, hurried to the river to perform his bidding. At this juncture dark clouds gathered in the sky, and the villagers rushed forth in wildest excitement to meet the rain-maker, who, as they supposed, was collecting in the heavens his prodigious stores of rain. As he descended the hill into Lattakoo, lightning flashed and thunder roared, while the black people danced and shouted until the earth fairly reverberated with the clamor. "Plant your gardens upon the hills," cried the rain-maker with pompous satisfaction, "for the valleys will be deluged with water." A few heavy drops of rain fell, demonstrating the sorcerer's skill and increasing the din of ecstatic shouting. A wild, heathenish scene it was, not soon to be forgotten by the little group of Christian missionaries who watched from a distance.

When the uproar had subsided, a few bold spirits left the crowd and strode to the dwellings of the missionaries. "Where is your God?" they cried with a sneer. "Have you not seen our Morimo? Have you not beheld him cast from his arm his fiery spears and rend the heavens? Have you not heard with your ears his voice in the clouds? You talk of Jehovah and Jesus; what can they do?" Heathenism was let loose that fateful day, and in its presence the Christians were discreetly silent. "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen." These were the words which rang dominantly in the mind of Robert Moffat in that chaotic hour.

Such was the entry into Lattakoo of the illustrious rain-maker who afterwards slept in his hut while the shower he was supposedly creating fell outside. For reasons not difficult to comprehend his arts were less successful on the sandy hills and plains of Lattakoo than in the mountain wilds of the Bahurutse, near the sources of the great rivers. "Secret rogues are disobeying my proclamations," he declared after several ignominious failures to produce rain. "You only give me sheep and goats to kill; therefore, I can only make

goat-rain; give me fat slaughter oxen, and I shall let you see ox-rain." Where indeed were "fat slaughter oxen" to be found in that famine-stricken land?

Goaded to desperation, the rain-maker resorted to one trick after another whereby to gain time until the blessed rain should fall. Whenever stray clouds appeared, he would command the women not to plant or sow lest they should scare the timorous clouds away. He would bid them go to the fields and gather certain roots and herbs, wherewith he would light his mysterious fires on the hillsides. Warily would he choose the time of new or full moon for his machinations, knowing well that atmospheric changes were likely to come at those seasons, if at all. His most preposterous demand was for a live baboon upon whose body not a blemish should be found, not even a single hair missing. None knew better than the rain-maker the impossibility of the task assigned. Nevertheless, chosen runners hastened to the mountains to leap from rock to rock in mad pursuit of the elusive baboon. Finally one was caught and brought in triumph to the rain-maker. With a tragic expression upon his face he ex-

claimed: "My heart is rent in pieces; I am dumb with grief. Did I not tell you," pointing with disguised satisfaction to the animal's scratched ear and tail, "that I could not make rain if there was one hair wanting?"

At last the rain-maker made a great discovery, which he announced with due solemnity. The clouds required strong medicine, and only the heart of a lion would do the business. Procure him a lion's heart, and he would make rain so abundant that whole towns might be swept away with the flood. Soon after this proclamation a lion attacked one of the cattle outposts, and hunters went out to kill the foe and procure medicine for the clouds at the same time. Severe orders were laid upon them to bring the lion's heart, whatever the consequences. Fortunately, one of their number carried a gun and shot the furious beast before the hunters were injured. In a triumphal procession they returned to the kraal bearing the lion's heart and singing the conqueror's song in lusty chorus. Upon the hilltop could be seen the rain-maker, concocting his medicines, kindling his weird fires, and stretching forth his puny hands toward the clouds, beckoning and

cajoling, or else threatening with vengeance if they dared disobey. And yet the rain, the precious rain, was withheld. "There is a cause for the hard-heartedness of the clouds, if only the rain-maker could find it out," remarked the chief's uncle significantly.

It was not long before the "cause" was discovered and with due ceremony announced to the offenders. Some weeks before, Robert and Mary Moffat had returned from a trip to Griqua Town and had transported in their wagon a bag of salt! That bag of salt had frightened the rain away. It is a wise adult who takes childhood seriously, and they were wise missionaries who never once laughed at the folly of their child neighbors, but received in all gravity their ridiculous charges. The bag was produced and opened in the presence of Mothibi and his attendants. "There it is," exclaimed the chief gleefully, as he saw the white contents. When upon further examination the supposed salt was found to be only white clay or chalk, the black people went away laughing at their own credulity.

For a long time the missionaries had been objects of suspicion, and the marvel was that they

had not been accused before. On every occasion they had pointed out to the rain-maker and the people the folly of their beliefs, at the same time proclaiming fearlessly the great realities of God's creation and control of the universe. "*Maka hela*" (only lies), retorted the people vehemently. Distrust at last broke its bounds, and curses were hurled at Mr. Hamilton and Robert Moffat as the cause of all the drought and misery. Their church bell and their prayers had frightened the clouds away. "Don't you," said the chief, glaring fiercely at Moffat, "bow down in your house and talk to something bad in the ground?" A council was held forthwith, and restrictions were laid upon the missionaries to which they refused submission, arguing that the site of the mission had been given them unconditionally.

At first the rain-maker seemed to avoid open accusation of the white men, restrained, perhaps, by a feeling of indebtedness because his wife had benefited by their medicines. He himself had held half-friendly intercourse with the foreigners, going occasionally to their houses and workshop, even to the church itself, and once or twice verging upon frankness in his conversation.

"What am I to do to pacify the people?" he asked one day in despair.

"Be an honest man," answered Moffat, "and confess you have been misleading them and yourself as well."

"They will kill me," he said, and went away sorrowful. At his wits' end to continue the fraud, the rain-maker now added his reproaches to the general furor against the missionaries.

"Do you not see," he proclaimed in the public fold, "that, when clouds come over us, Hamilton and Moffat look at them? Their white faces dispel the clouds in fright. No rain can be expected while they are in the country."

Being informed of their misdemeanor, the missionaries agreed to look upon the ground all day long if so doing would mend matters.

Strangely enough, the venom of the people veered suddenly from the missionaries to the rain-maker himself, who became the object of their bitterest hatred. Hearing that some one was to be speared and suspecting that the rain-maker was the intended victim, Moffat resolved to verify his suspicions and save the man's life, if possible. To ferret out a secret of that nature was no easy

matter, but Moffat hit upon a plan which worked like a charm. In the kraal was a woman of influence, likely to be informed of the plot, who had often received the missionaries' remedies for her ailments. To her hut he went and, having engaged her in conversation about her health, remarked in the most casual manner: "Why are they thinking of killing the rain-maker? They surely do not intend to eat him. Why not let the poor man go to his own land?"

"Who told you?" asked the woman abruptly, falling at once into the trap. Possessed of the elusive secret, Moffat made his way to the public fold where about thirty leading men sat in council. In no uncertain tones he charged them with the crime they were about to commit, accusing them of having made a god of a mere man and then, because he failed to please them, plotting to kill him. An aged man arose quivering with rage and, alluding to the lean herds, the starving people, and the cattle which the rain-maker had devoured, vowed he would plunge his spear into the rain-maker's heart and no one should hinder him. That a man should labor to save the life of his enemy, as their missionary was doing, was be-

yond comprehension, as were the stories that he persistently told them about a certain Jesus Christ. What sort of being, forsooth, was this white foreigner who persuaded them against their will? In the council of death the missionary's voice prevailed, and the rain-maker's life was saved. Mothibi himself conducted him over the plain to the Matlwaring River, returning, like a child conscious of meritorious conduct, to the missionaries for the praise they did not withhold.

The departure of the rain-maker seemed to be the signal for further persecution of the missionaries. Every mishap was laid at their door, and their teachings were received with savage cries of *"maka hela."* If a Griqua hunting in the country overstepped the bounds, his misdeeds were charged to the missionaries. If a native of Lattakoo went to visit in Griqualand and was ill-treated, the missionaries should have prevented it. One blazing noonday a chief with a retinue of attendants approached the mission premises and sat down under the shade of a large tree close by the Moffats' house. Something sinister and menacing was suggested by their appearance. Out in the field, under pretense of a

hunt, a secret council had been held, and these men had come, a deputation from that body, to inform the missionaries of the decision reached. Moffat was occupied in repairing his wagon near by, but upon hearing that an important communication was to be delivered, he summoned Mr. Hamilton, and the two waited quietly for the verdict to be pronounced. In the door of their cottage stood Mrs. Moffat, the baby in her arms, intently watching the crucial scene before her. The spokesman stepped forward, assuming an attitude almost impressive as his spear quivered in his right hand. The chiefs had determined, so he said, that the missionaries should leave the country. Hitherto their warnings had been disregarded, but if disobedience continued, violent measures would be used to enforce their command. Upon hearing these words, Robert Moffat drew himself to the full height of his tall figure and made answer in ringing tones:

"If you are resolved to rid yourselves of us, you must resort to stronger measures, for our hearts are with you. You may shed blood or burn us out. We know you will not touch our wives and children. Then shall they who sent us know,

and God, who now sees and hears what we do, shall know that we have been persecuted indeed."

There was an answering fire in Mary Moffat's eyes as she looked proudly at her husband and then wonderingly at the black faces which confronted him. Glancing around upon his companions, the chief shook his head significantly. "These men must have ten lives," said he, "since they are so fearless of death; there must be something in immortality."

Thus saying, he turned away, and the whole company broke ranks and dispersed. About these missionaries was a touch of that matchless heroism which once awed a band of Roman soldiers into saying, "Never man spake like this man."

CHAPTER XI

"THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN"

Take up the white man's burden;
  Ye dare not stoop to less,
Nor call too loud on Freedom
  To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
  By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
  Shall weigh your God and you.

—*Rudyard Kipling*

home to Ma-Mary (mother of Mary), as the natives called Mrs. Moffat. Ma-Mary always had a welcome for homeless bairns, and the little Bushman waifs were received at once into the family, to be called Dicky and Ann. It was not long before Ann became a trusty nurse for the small Mary and, by and by, for another little white child, who came in the year 1823 to add her baby prattle to the household life. She, too, was named Ann, for her Scotch grandmother, that dark-eyed, wonderful woman who had played such a vital part in her own son's life. Little Ann Moffat came into a troubled world at a particularly troubled season, but to the Moffat children then and always their father and mother were like resourceful giants who could fend off foe and disaster from their defenseless flock. In this childlike conjecture they were not far from the simple truth for Africa had made Robert and Mary Moffat heroic.

The village of Lattakoo was still stricken with drought and famine when a new terror added its sting to the general misery. A frightful enemy was approaching stealthily from the east, "eating up" all the tribes on the line of march. A mighty woman named Mantatee was said to be

leading the black host, as many as the locusts in number. Her magic power supplied the army with food and sent out swarms of real locusts as advance agents of destruction. Desolation and ruin were left in her trail. Such were the fantastic tales which drifted into Lattakoo, to be discussed excitedly in the *pitshos,* or public meetings, and in informal palavers, for, like the Athenians in the days of Saint Paul, the Africans in the days of Robert Moffat "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Only the sharp pinch of hunger or the weary drag of sleep could quell the African passion for talk.

Among all the grotesque reports of impending disaster who could discern the hidden germ of truth? Not the native peoples, for some believed and some disdained and no one knew for a certainty. From his own observations Moffat came to the conclusion that the tyrant Chaka, chief of the Zulus, was waging his destructive warfare somewhere to the eastward and that his bloody conquests formed the basis of the fabulous stories which were told. As Chaka was too far away to be a menace to the Bechuanas, Moffat resolved

to carry out a project he had formed some months before.

About two hundred miles to the north of Lattakoo lived a notorious chief of a notorious tribe, Makaba of the Bangwaketsi. So masterful were this chief and his people that the Batlapings feared them exceedingly, even as they feared the woman Mantatee and her half-mythical army. Scarcely could they mention the name of Makaba without a curse, such a hated enemy had he become. Yet Moffat, with true missionary zeal, was bent on visiting Makaba in his own domains. His inclination to go was seconded by Makaba's invitation to come, and accordingly he made preparations for the journey. As soon as his intentions became known, Mothibi and the Batlapings furiously opposed his going. Out of memory and imagination they conjured all the murders Makaba had committed, all the evil deeds the tribe had done. Swearing by their king and their fathers, they declared that, should he go, his doom was fixed, for he would never come back. Ma-Mary and the two children might as well depart at once for England, for never again would they see husband and father.

But it would take more than grisly predictions to deter Robert Moffat when once his purpose was fixed. With Mr. Hamilton he had prayed and deliberated, and both were convinced that the journey was timely and right; in fact, a part of God's plan for the development of the mission. If successful, three important results would be secured. The Batlapings and Bangwaketsi would be brought into friendly relations and a clash prevented. The chieftainship of Jesus Christ would be proclaimed to a tribe of more than ordinary intelligence and prowess. And finally Moffat would learn the Bechuana language more rapidly by the long period of association with the black people exclusively.

As a last attempt to defeat his plan, Mothibi forbade some of his escort to accompany him. So it was with a depleted band of attendants that Robert Moffat turned away from Lattakoo to face the rigors of an African journey without the one companion who for more than three years had lightened every long jaunt into the wilderness. Since coming to Africa, Mary Moffat had made it a rule, whenever possible, to join her husband in the ox-cart for every journey outlasting

two days. Without Mary, Robert would not take pains to make himself comfortable, and he had had enough of that rugged life in Namaqualand, so she said. But this time she must stay at home with her babies, and he must go forth with his black men, and, as it was of old in England, the staying and the waiting were harder tasks to perform than the dangerous feats which fell to the lot of the traveler. Yet in the little reed house at Lattakoo it was not as grievous to be left behind as it once was in the stone house at Dukinfield, for there was solace in the wife's loneliness which the maiden sadly missed.

Three days of wagon travel brought Moffat to Old Lattakoo, or Letakong, the former home of the Batlaping tribe from which they had migrated to Lattakoo. At Letakong the air was full of the same old rumors concerning a fierce and mysterious enemy on the march toward Bechuanaland. Pushing on to Nokaneng, twenty miles further, they found the vague rumors supplanted by definite reports of the enemy's presence. It was said that the Barolongs of Kunwana, one hundred miles beyond, had been attacked, and their town captured by the Mantatees. Still the report was

unverified, for spies had been sent out and returned with no further news to confirm the tale. To gain reliable information, as well as to continue the journey, Moffat and his companions proceeded to Mosita, fifteen miles from the town reported to be in possession of the Mantatees. Halting there, they prepared the meat of a rhinoceros they had shot and watched for signs of the enemy's presence. As near as they were to Kunwana, silence and mystery were at first the only answer to their watch and inquiry. Such was the tribal isolation in the olden times in Africa!

After a delay of two days they were ready to discard all the rumors as myths of heathen fancy and to proceed comfortably on their way to the Bangwaketsi, when suddenly two men of the Barolong tribe ran excitedly into Mosita with a tale to tell which answered all questions and quelled all doubts. Over beyond the hills, which were plainly visible, lay encamped the great black enemy, even that fabulous host which for more than a year had terrified the tribes of Bechuanaland. A real and palpable foe they were, for the men had seen them with their own eyes and had

run for dear life when the Mantatees swept like a horde of destruction into Kunwana. Lattakoo was to be the next object of attack, so these witnesses affirmed.

For Moffat and his companions the news brought a swift reversal of plans. Back to Lattakoo they must go at the utmost speed the creaking ox-cart could attain, haunted by the awful fear that the Mantatees might outstrip them and begin their deadly work before the Batlapings were warned and prepared.

Surprise and consternation seized the people of Lattakoo when they saw their missionary returning through the thorn hedge and heard the tidings he brought. A public meeting was held, that Moffat might recount the information he had gathered about the approaching enemy. When he finished speaking, a pall of gloom settled upon the black audience. Finally Mothibi arose and bespoke the gratitude of his people that Moffat had been *tlogo e thata* (hard-headed) and had pursued the journey in defiance of their wishes, for by so doing he had made timely discovery of their danger. What should they do to save their homes from ruin, their tribe from extinction? With one

accord they turned to the missionary for advice. "Seek aid of the Griquas," he counseled, "for they have guns and horses." If the people desired, he would go himself to Griqua Town and beseech the chief, Waterboer, to come to their help.

His offer was readily accepted, and Moffat started at once for Griqua Town, traveling perforce by ox-cart, since horses there were none. Upon learning the missionary's errand, Waterboer, the chief, mounted his horse and rode away to Campbell to rally the people there for a united stand against the common foe. It was the opinion of the Griquas that the combined forces should go forth and encounter the enemy at a distance, rather than wait for them to approach and attack the home towns. With the promise that the Griquas, as soon as mobilized, would come to Lattakoo, Moffat hastened home to reassure the Batlapings, who were panic-stricken and helpless in his absence. The Griqua mode of resistance met with approval, and all the neighboring tribes, Batlaros, Barolongs, Bakotus, and Bamairis, were summoned to a *pitsho* to be held on the morrow in the public fold at Lattakoo.

At ten o'clock in the morning of the thirteenth

day of June, the warriors assembled, one thousand strong, and marched in a body to the public fold, singing war songs, fighting mock battles, and gesticulating wildly as they went along. Arriving at the fold, they took their seats on the ground in a circle, leaving an open arena in the center for the speakers. Each man held a glistening shield to which a number of spears were fastened. A quiver of poisoned arrows hung from each black shoulder, and each right hand brandished a battle-ax. Some wore tiger skins and tails, and brightly colored plumes waved from many a black head. It was a primitive council of war, with the picturesqueness of shining armor and startling color contrasts vivified by outbursts of elemental passion in song and dance and frenzied motion.

"Be silent, ye Batlapings. Be silent, ye Barolongs," proclaimed the first speaker, addressing every tribe individually. To each salutation came a groan in response. Then, pointing his spear in the direction of the enemy, he uttered curse upon curse and ended by thrusting his spear repeatedly toward the invisible foe. This was the tribal declaration of war, to which the audience responded by a loud, whistling sound of applause.

After each speech a verse of a war song was sung, the wild dance renewed, and silence again enjoined.

"To-day we are called upon to oppose an enemy who is the enemy of all." Thus spoke Moshume from the center of the fold: "Mr. Moffat has been near the camp of the enemy; we all opposed his going; we are to-day all glad that he went; he did not listen to us; he has warned us and the Griquas. What are we now to do? If we flee, they will overtake us; if we fight, they will conquer; they are as strong as a lion; they kill and eat, and leave nothing. I know ye, Batlapings, that at home and in the face of women ye are men, but women in the face of the enemy; ye are ready to run when you should stand; think, think, and prepare your hearts this day; be united in one; make your hearts hard."

This challenge was followed by the exhortation of an aged chief, who spoke words like these: "The missionary has discovered our danger like the rising sun after a dark night; a man sees the danger he was in when darkness shut his eyes. We must not act like Bechuanas; we must act like *Makooas* (white people). Is this our *pitsho?*

No, it is the *pitsho* of the missionary; therefore, we must speak and act like *Makooas.*"

Several speakers harangued the assembly in turn, after which Mothibi, the chief, spoke the concluding words. "Ye warriors, prepare for the battle; let your shields be strong, your quivers full of arrows, and your battle-axes sharp as hunger." When his speech was ended, wild enthusiasm swept the audience, followed by a pandemonium of excitement lasting nearly two hours. Women snatched weapons from the men and brandished them frantically, while old and young gesticulated and danced in an abandon of frenzy. Meanwhile the great, grim danger which threatened was well-nigh forgotten in the deluded enthusiasm for war.

CHAPTER XII

THE WAR CRY OF THE MANTATEES

The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon!
—*Judges vii. 20*

"WATERBOER, THE GRIQUA CHIEF."

XII

THE WAR CRY OF THE MANTATEES

ELEVEN days after the tribal declaration of war the Griqua horsemen came galloping into Lattakoo armed for the conflict. The hour of action was at hand after the long days of waiting. The enemy was now reported at Letakong, only thirty-six miles away. At any moment they might be on the swift march toward Lattakoo. To be ready for instant flight, should flight become imperative, the missionaries had packed their bulkiest belongings and buried them in the ground, an impromptu safety deposit. Even with the arrival of the commando from Griqua Town, the situation was dark and ominous, for the combined troops of Bechuanas and Griquas were no match for the formidable host of Mantatees. The whole country north of the Orange River would be ravaged and laid waste unless God vouchsafed his aid to this little band of black warriors, wild and vengeful as they were by nature, but mar-

shaled and restrained by the strong hand of the missionary, Robert Moffat.

At the united entreaty of Griquas and Batlapings, Moffat had consented to accompany the troops, in the hope that he might be able to effect a treaty through the white men reported to be with the invading army. Mr. Melville, government agent at Griqua Town, had come with the commando, intending to go on to the front, and the two old friends of Cape Town days worked shoulder to shoulder in the desperate hours which followed.

On the eve of departure all met to pray for God's blessing and guidance for the perilous undertaking. The next day the warriors went out through the thorn hedge, leaving a forsaken little village of huts, populated only by women and children and old men. In the reed house which belonged to the English mission, Mary Moffat was left with her babes and her little Bushman waifs, to bide her husband's return and to pray unceasingly for his success and safety.

Meanwhile out in the wilderness the black troops with their white leaders came to their first encampment at the Matlwaring River. When

camp was settled for the night, Moffat mounted his horse and, with Waterboer, the Griqua chief, and a few picked men, rode away into the darkness to reconnoiter the enemy's position. For four hours they rode—rode until they reached a covert of trees where they halted until morning. At break of day they swung into their saddles and went cautiously forward until, on the opposite hill, they saw a monstrous black patch with jets of gray smoke arising here and there. Was it a vast burnt district from which the fires had not yet gone out? Look, and see that the fires are tended by living hands and that living beings swarm the hillside and color it black. It is the camp of the Mantatees, a huge, surging organism suddenly swept with confusion, for weird beings are entering their domains. Never before had the Mantatees seen a man on horseback, and they took horse and rider for one fantastic monster. War-axes and battle ornaments glistened in the morning sun as their wearers moved hither and yon in alarm.

Realizing that they were observed, Moffat and his companions advanced more slowly until they came to a ravine where a young woman was gathering acacia pods and eating them in the despera-

tion of hunger. Addressing her in the Bechuana language, Moffat and Waterboer, the chief, explained who they were and that they desired a parley with the enemy. Would she not take their message to the army encamped on the hill? After the girl had gone her way, they again rode forward and drew rein within two musket-shots of the enemy. There they waited a half-hour, to give time for their message to be delivered, as well as to convince the Mantatees of their fearlessness and good intentions. From this point they despatched a messenger to carry tidings to the Griquas, as yet twenty miles behind. Searching about for water they came upon a pool, near which lay the skeleton-like bodies of several Mantatees, who had evidently crept thither to drink and had died of hunger and exhaustion. One body lay partly in the water—the only water there was to drink, if thirst were to be quenched, and African thirst is an imperious master, admitting no degree of fastidiousness.

Receiving no answer to their peaceful message, save a few spears flung savagely in their direction, they advanced nearer until they were within one hundred yards of the Mantatee camp. Acting

upon a prearranged plan, Moffat and a companion were about to swing from their saddles, intending to walk unarmed toward the foe, when a savage yell changed their tactics in a hurry. "Be on guard; they are preparing to attack!" Moffat had barely time to shout the warning before several hundred armed men rushed furiously toward them, throwing their weapons with terrific velocity. Turning the frightened horses, they galloped away, not a moment too soon. On a hill within plain sight of the Mantatees they took their stand, and there they waited all day, shooting two *khoris,* or wild peacocks, for food and seeking in vain to entice the enemy into peaceful council.

At sunset Moffat mounted his horse and rode back alone to confer with Mr. Melville and the Griqua chiefs as to the next move in the dangerous game. It was during this council that Cornelius Kok, one of the four Griqua chiefs, presented his best horse to Mr. Moffat, urging its acceptance on the plea that the missionary's life was more valuable than his own. Had it not been for this horse, one of the finest the commando possessed, Moffat would have been sore bested in the fierce strife which followed.

After an almost sleepless night in the bitter cold the horsemen were astir and off before the break of day. When they came within one hundred and fifty yards of the Mantatee camp, they drew up in battle array, hoping that the sight of so many armed men on horseback might intimidate the enemy and bring them to terms. For answer came a savage howl and a fierce onslaught with clubs and javelins. Retreating a short distance, the Griquas took their stand, and Waterboer, their commander-in-chief, fired the first shot, instantly felling a Mantatee warrior to the ground. Other shots followed, all fired with the same sure aim which marked one victim after another. It was expected that the Mantatees would be dismayed when they saw their comrades fall dead by an almost invisible weapon which cut the air like lightning, but no, they tore spears and clubs from the dying and rushed forward with a fiendish yell of vengeance, forcing the Griquas to retreat a second time. In the thick of battle, efforts were made to renew proposals of truce, but to no avail. Wild, disorderly attack on the one hand was met by steady, deliberate firing on the other, with an accuracy which was deadly in its destructiveness.

Soon after the fighting began, the Batlapings came bravely to the front and began playing on the enemy with their poisoned arrows. Some half-dozen Mantatees had only to turn fiercely upon them, when one and all scampered away like frightened children. "Women in the face of the enemy; ready to run when ye should stand." These taunting words had Moshume spoken in the tribal council at Lattakoo two weeks before!

For two and a half hours the battle raged between one hundred Griqua horsemen on the one side and many thousand Mantatee warriors on the other. At last, finding their ammunition rapidly diminishing, the Griquas took their lives in their hands and began to storm the enemy's position. Under the concentrated fury of this assault the Mantatees gave way and fled in panic toward the west. Instantly the Griqua horsemen cut off their escape in that direction, whereupon they rushed down into the ravine, as if determined not to return by the way they had come. Again they were intercepted, and wildest confusion prevailed. On the stony ground the horses became well-nigh unmanageable, and in the swirling clouds of dust friend could not be distinguished from foe.

Swarms of black humanity were fleeing or pursuing this way and that in mad terror. To the general clash and tumult were added the bellowing of oxen, the yells of defiant warriors, the groans of wounded and dying, and the plaintive cries of women and children.

As the dust lifted and the din somewhat subsided, the Mantatees were seen in dogged flight toward the town of Letakong, half a mile away, where was encamped another division of their army. The Griquas followed in hot pursuit, and another fierce combat took place in the smoke and flames of the burning village wherein the enemy tried to entrap them. At last, goaded to desperation, the entire host of Mantatee warriors fled distractedly toward the north. By the area covered by the army in flight, Moffat estimated their number to be forty thousand, as over against one hundred Griqua horsemen who had contrived their defeat. Had both sections of the army fought together, the issue might have been sadly different. As it was, not a single Griqua horseman lost his life in the combat, while the slain of the Mantatees numbered four or five hundred and the field was strewn with the dying.

The instant the camp was deserted by its warriors and by the Griquas who followed in pursuit, the Bechuanas rushed in to plunder the dead and murder the living. For the sake of a few copper rings worn on neck, arm, or leg, or for the hollow boast of having killed a Mantatee, they began to butcher the women and children with their spears and war-axes. Into this orgy of bloodshed Moffat galloped at full speed, his eyes flaming and his voice ringing with determination. Before his commanding presence many a black hand was stayed from its brutal deed. When the women realized that the white man was their savior instead of their murderer, they cried piteously, "I am a woman; I am a woman."

Unto the moment of death the Mantatee men defied their assailants, sometimes fighting grimly when ten or twelve spears were piercing their bodies. Fifty Bechuanas would surround a single wounded man, who would fight to the death rather than yield. Several times Moffat narrowly escaped the spears and war-axes of wounded Mantatees while seeking to rescue the women and children. Once he was caught in a deadly trap, from which there seemed no egress to safety. A

rocky height was on one side and the enemy on the other, with but a single narrow passage along which he could make a dash for safety on his swift steed. Midway in this passage rose the grim figure of a man, wounded to death but rallying all his strength for one last stroke of revenge. There he stood, weapon in hand, awaiting his prey. At that juncture a Griqua from a distance perceived the missionary's peril, raised his gun, and fired a shot which whizzed so close to Moffat that he shuddered, but which in one instant cleared his path to safety.

The battle was over and the victory won, but the old danger lingered still. Back in Lattakoo, when the warriors returned to their huts, the old fear gathered new force from realization of the enemy's might. The Mantatees were coming, so they heard, coming to Lattakoo to avenge their loss. Without "the thunder and lightning of the Griquas," as they termed the musketry, the Bechuanas would be as the dust of their feet. Alone, they were helpless.

A night of sleepless vigil followed the receipt of these tidings. The little town lay in utter darkness, save for embers of the household

fires, around which crouched trembling families, harassed by constant fears.

The night was black with darkness and tense with foreboding. The men remained out of doors with ears strained to catch the first unusual sound. The dogs barked incessantly as if aware of the human dread. No spies were sent out, no watch set; not a single inhabitant was between the lonely village and the field of battle. Scarcely a person dared stir in the breathless stillness, broken only by the ominous barking of the dogs. Once a mournful cry went up from a corner of the village, and every heart palpitated in response. It was the cry of the bereaved mother and children mourning for the father killed by the hand of the enemy.

In the kitchens and outhouses of the mission, the Mantatee women who had been sheltered there looked on unmoved or slept in utmost indifference. Mrs. Moffat wrapped the sleeping babies in warm garments, to be ready for flight to the mountains should there be chance for escape. By the door Moffat hung his coat over his gun, so that he could snatch both in case of hurried flight. Imagination pictured a host of warriors surround-

ing the town, awaiting only the light of day to begin a wholesale massacre.

The climax of terror was reached when, toward morning, a woman ran panting into the village and dropped in a faint of exhaustion at the entrance of a native house. She had run the whole night through, having barely escaped the spears of the enemy the day before. When she recovered consciousness, the first word upon her lips was the one word all dreaded to hear, "The Mantatees!" Like an electric current the fatal word burned its way through the village, scorching every heart with fear.

It was a night when faith was put to a crucial test. Then, if ever, must the trust of the Christian be vindicated, his belief in the watchful love of God demonstrated. On that night the missionaries were stalwart witnesses to the power of their religion to give courage and endurance in the hour of trial. Once and again awed chiefs and people stole to their door for sympathy and support. For themselves, as they afterwards said, fear was held within bounds by perpetual prayer to God.

Daylight came at last and dispelled, as only

daylight can, many specters of the night. All was quiet beyond the hedge of thorn as far as eye could see. Not a Mantatee was in sight, not a hint of his presence. Gradually the terror abated, but as the Griquas were unable to come to their assistance and the Mantatees had not yet departed homeward, it was decided, with the full sanction of the chiefs, that the missionary families should remove to Griqua Town to stay until the danger was past.

Having seen wife and children settled at Griqua Town, Robert Moffat returned alone to Lattakoo to share the problems and perils of his chosen people. One of those problems was already solved, for the Batlapings had learned at last to value and love their missionary. Had they been an idolatrous people, they would have been ready to worship him as a god, for had he not shown them a love surpassing human? Easily could he have taken his family and slipped away to safety, but instead he chose to stand by the black people in their need, to secure for them the help of the Griqua horsemen, without which they would have shared the fate of the other Bechuana villages. The missionary's resources and unselfishness they

had learned to value, but when would they take heed to his message, that priceless message for which alone he had left home and country and cast in his lot among them?

CHAPTER XIII

THE WIFE'S PART

Oh, I must feel your brain prompt mine,
  Your heart anticipate my heart,
You must be just before, in fine,
  See and make me see, for your part,
New depths of the divine!

—Robert Browning (to his wife)

"REAL LITTLE BUSHMEN, STRAIGHT FROM THE WILDS."

XIII

THE WIFE'S PART

Lattakoo, July 28, 1824.

My dear Robert:

It is with a faint, faint hope that you will ever see this that I take up my pen, it being so very improbable that you will meet with the Barolong who takes it; but the possibility of such a thing compels me not to neglect the opportunity, anxious as I am to convey to your affectionate heart tidings of our welfare. Our covenant God has graciously protected us and all about us ever since you left, and I have strong confidence that he has also been with you. But oh, my dear, I find it requires the exercise of some fortitude to be calm and serene under such a separation, in such circumstances, and at such a time, in a land of barbarians. In vain has my heart fluttered when I have seen a strange face, hoping he would pull out from under his kaross a letter, no post yet having arrived from you, and I began to think that I must not have that exquisite pleasure till the living epistle bursts in upon me himself. You know I dreaded your departure exceedingly. I had many fears about your health from that ugly cough. I had also fears on account of the tumultuous state of the land. I expected also to suffer a good deal myself from low spirits in my great solitude, but in this I was mistaken, having been remarkably composed and very seldom in a melancholy mood. When I felt it coming on, I made great efforts to dispel it and have been successful. I feel very thankful for the support I

have had, and derive encouragement from it that all is well with you, and that your journey is under the smiles of our Heavenly Father. I have also great liberty at the throne of grace for you and the cause of Christ.

About ten days after your departure two hastily written notes from Mr. Helm to Mr. Hamilton arrived, bearing different dates, the last of them the sixth instant, saying that an immense body of Mantatees was rapidly approaching Griqua Town and that the Koranna mission was destroyed. The Mantatees were not the same people who fought at Letakong. You will easily conceive how I felt with regard to you, but was enabled in the confidence of faith to commend you to our covenant God. The idea of any of them on their return falling in with your single wagon is truly shocking.

Since you left, Jacob Cloete, with a number of armed Korannas on horses, besides a number of Bushmen, has been making terrible ravages at a town beyond Lehaise's, has taken a great number of cattle, killed eight chiefs, besides others and women and children. By all accounts he has acted most barbarously; the people here were much alarmed, as he threatened to come here to get powder. Of course I had some fears, but am happy to say he has gone back to his place.

I know you will excuse the brevity of this letter when you reflect on the uncertainty of getting it. I will promise the man a few beads if he brings it to you.

With a throb of yearning at her heart Mary Moffat folded the letter and handed it to the black man who would deliver it to her husband if

perchance he fell in with his ox-cart somewhere on the long trail to the north. It was exactly four weeks since Moffat had left home in the company of some Griqua hunters to resume the interrupted journey to Makaba, chief of the Bangwaketsi. At the time of his departure the Mantatee invaders were supposed to have dispersed, but he had not been absent many days before the threat of their return was heard in Lattakoo. About the same time a mob of savage marauders from various tribes collected in the mountains forty miles to the west and began a mad career of plunder and bloodshed. Before Moffat went away, it had been decided to remove the mission station from Lattakoo to Kuruman, eight miles away in a fertile region near the source of the Kuruman River. To prepare for removal, Mr. Hamilton spent the week-days at the new site, returning to Lattakoo for Sunday services, which were conducted regularly in the little church. His absence during the week, together with her husband's, left Mrs. Moffat alone with her small children, attended only by a young Hottentot woman, who occupied an adjoining house.

One evening the Hottentot girl rushed in,

wringing her hands and crying, "The Mantatees have been seen at Nokaneng and are on their way to Lattakoo." Mrs. Moffat sent a messenger to Mothibi to inquire if the report were correct; to which he replied that it was, but that little danger was to be apprehended before morning. Committing herself and her little charges to the protection of God, she lay down "in quietness and confidence" and fell asleep. At midnight she was awakened by a loud rapping on the door. Who could it be? Was it Jacob Cloete, the leader of the mountain brigands, or was it a messenger to announce the approach of the Mantatees? Going to the door she asked, "Who is there?" Mothibi's voice was heard in reply. It was the chief himself who had come with a retinue of attendants to warn her that the Mantatees were near at hand. Admitting her visitors, who crowded the little house to its utmost capacity, Mrs. Moffat seated herself calmly at a table in the midst of the noisy group and wrote to Mr. Hamilton, asking him to come at once to her relief. From that moment until daylight, uproar and confusion sounded from every quarter of the village.

At eight o'clock Mr. Hamilton arrived with the

three Hottentots who had been working with him at Kuruman, and preparations were hastily made for flight. In the town warriors were assembling, and thousands of people were hiding away precious possessions or packing them for sudden departure. One messenger after another ran in through the thorn hedge, each with the same fatal tidings on his lips. At noon came a special runner with the light of good news on his face. The Mantatees had changed their course, he cried with joy, and were headed toward the Barolongs instead of the Batlapings. Then all the black people of Lattakoo rejoiced greatly, but to the one white woman in their midst the tidings brought a thrust of fear sharper than any she had yet experienced. In a flash she realized that the danger had been lifted from herself and the children only to be thrown with greater menace across the path of her husband. At this very time he would be on his way home, unattended by the Griqua hunters, and in his solitary ox-wagon with some half-dozen companions would encounter the whole host of Mantatee savages. There was nothing on earth to save him except the direct interposition of God.

For three dreadful weeks the wife was left in

ignorance of her husband's fate, though tortured every now and then with reports of his destruction. One man had seen a broken fragment of his wagon; another a piece of his saddle, and others had picked up bits of his linen stained with blood. At last a few men were persuaded to go out as a search party, when, on the very day of their departure, a battered ox-cart crept into Lattakoo bearing the beloved wanderer himself, safe and sound. The meeting that hour in the little reed house at Lattakoo was charged with joy and thanksgiving which recalled that day in the eventful past when Mary Smith came to her lover's arms in Cape Town.

For his part, Moffat had a wonderful deliverance to recount. He had traveled safely to Makaba's domain, a chiefdom comprising some twenty villages with seventy thousand inhabitants. He had stood in the presence of the redoubtable chief and received marked tokens of his good-will. Like Mothibi, Makaba turned a deaf ear to the missionary's message, although apparently pleased at the suggestion of having a missionary sent to his tribe. With this hope kindling his thoughts Moffat started for home, the interest of his visit

mingling with the eagerness which always stirred his heart when returning to Mary and the bairns. According to agreement, the Griquas remained behind to hunt, and Moffat set forth in his ox-cart with his half-dozen attendants. He had journeyed but a short distance when, to his surprise, he was overtaken by the Griqua chief, Berend Berend, and his band of huntsmen. Berend Berend, who was himself a Christian man, had been uneasy about the missionary's safety with so small a bodyguard and had consequently given up the hunt to escort him home.

Near Pitsana, the chief town of the Barolong tribe, this little company of twenty Griqua horsemen encountered the whole fierce army of Mantatees and routed them completely, thus saving the Barolongs from slaughter and the missionary from a fate unspeakable. When the awful danger was passed, Berend Berend looked with awe into the face of Robert Moffat and spoke of the wonderful manifestation of God's providence they had seen that day. After the journey was over, Mary Moffat looked with yearning affection into the face of her husband, and thanked God for giving him back, as it were, from the dead.

Such was the story of the first missionary journey to Makaba, chief of the Bangwaketsi; in which the wife's part was not the least in heroism and importance.

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For seven and a half years Robert Moffat had been a voluntary exile from home at the call of the Leader whom he followed. In Afrikaner's kraal, the scene of his early labors, there had been quick results to cheer his heart, but in Lattakoo only the Leader himself could conquer the dull discouragement of the fruitless days. On the desert uplands of Great Namaqualand, loneliness would have well-nigh crushed the youthful pioneer had not Afrikaner and his tribe received his word with gladness and himself with friendliness. In Bechuanaland, he could the more easily wait long for the harvest because Mary was by his side to share his hope and his daily battle. God had thus mercifully provided for the needs of his servant, according to the promise that he "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure."

When, in the year 1829, Christian Afrikaner had come in his ox-cart to Lattakoo and journeyed with the missionaries over the road to Griqua Town, they had parted in glad anticipation of the day when Afrikaner and his tribe should remove to the neighborhood of his beloved friend, Robert Moffat. Scarcely two years later a message came creeping across the desert from Great Namaqualand, bringing sincere mourning to the missionary family at Lattakoo. Afrikaner was dead. From his humble earthly life with its narrow compass of tribal villages, but with its boundless hope, he had passed into the blessed fellowship of the saints of all times and races.

When he realized that his death was near, Afrikaner called the tribe together, as Joshua once summoned all the tribes of Israel, to receive his parting blessing and admonition. "We are not," said he, "what we were, savages, but men professing to be taught according to the gospel. Let us then do accordingly. Live peaceably with all men, if possible. Remain together as you have done since I knew you. Then, when the directors think fit to send you a missionary, you may be ready to receive him. . . . My former life is

stained with blood, but Jesus Christ has pardoned me, and I am going to heaven. Oh! beware of falling into the same evils into which I have led you frequently; but seek God, and he will be found of you to direct you."

In course of time the Wesleyans, with whom Robert Moffat had been connected in his boyhood, sent missionaries to Great Namaqualand who settled in close proximity to Afrikaner's kraal. Under their ministrations, Titus Afrikaner, that fierce and rebellious brother of the chief, became a convert to the religion he once violently opposed. Peace and harmony were restored among the tribes where strife had prevailed. In his reminiscent moods Moffat looked gratefully back to those brief years in Afrikaner's kraal and saw in memory that travel-stained, lovable figure, who in his utter loyalty would willingly have laid down his life for his missionary.

In Lattakoo Robert and Mary drank the bitter cup of defeat. Not a single Batlaping had yet shown the faintest interest in the real purpose of their life among them. Petty persecution and hostility had given way to respect and affection as they saw evidences of the missionaries' skill

and unselfishness, especially as manifested in the Mantatee invasion. But to listen attentively to their teaching about a Great Being whom they could not see, and about a life after death, was a task too irksome, unless rewarded by a bit of food or a trinket as equivalent for their time. Even to speak of death drove the poor people distracted, for death to them meant annihilation, and the idea was ghastly in its repugnance. To ask them to believe in a resurrection was preposterous, for had they not seen the bleached bones of the dead lying on the sand? *"Maka hela"* (only lies) was their first comment, softened as time went on into exclamations of surprise at the missionaries' credulity.

In all the accustomed life of the Batlaping people there was nothing to suggest the worship of any being superior to themselves, nothing for the missionary to use as a point of contact between heathen superstitions and Christian faith. No temple, no idol, no wayside shrine, not even a sacred stream or tree; no word in the language to express the meaning of God! If the missionary searched for ancient legends handed down from generations past, there were none to be found; if

he watched for a glint of understanding or a flicker of desire upon the faces of his black audience, he watched in vain. "They look upon the sun with the eyes of an ox," observed Mr. Campbell as he traveled among them. The highest bliss their minds could conceive was "a great fire covered with pots full of meat." The missionary's effort, as Mr. Moffat said, was like that of the child who tries to grasp the polished surface of a mirror, or the farmer who seeks to convert the granite rock into fertile soil.

"Mary," said Robert Moffat one day to his wife, "this is hard work; think how long we have been preaching to this people, and no fruits yet appear."

"It is hard work," she replied, "but take courage; the gospel has not yet been preached to them in their own language wherein they were born. They have heard only through interpreters, and interpreters who have themselves no just understanding or real love of the truth. We must not expect the blessing until you are able from your own lips and in their own language to convey it through their ears to their hearts."

"From that hour," declared Moffat in recount-

ing the conversation, "I gave myself with untiring diligence to the acquisition of the language."

There were peculiar difficulties in the way of acquiring the native speech of the Bechuana people. It had no written form, and the chance to practise the oral language was hindered by the presence of many Dutch-speaking people at Lattakoo. Moreover, wars and rumors of wars had three times driven the Moffats in hasty flight to Griqua Town, thus seriously impeding study. At Kuruman, the new station to which they removed in 1825, hard manual labor claimed Moffat's time and strength for well-nigh two years. Sometimes he had to stand in water up to his waist, cutting thatch for his new house. Under the burning sun every phase of the builder's craft fell to his lot to perform. Yet in those strenuous months he found time to complete a spelling-book, catechism, and small portions of the Bible, and to send them to the Cape for publication. Religious services were held as usual for the Batlapings, who were congregating in villages of huts along the edge of the valley.

In 1827 the first permanent building was completed, a substantial house of stone to take the

place of the flimsy wooden structure which served as temporary abode. Ditches had been dug and water conducted from the river to the gardens which already bloomed in the valley. The new station was now so well developed that Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Hughes, a recent addition to the missionary staff, agreed to complete the building operations and release Moffat for language study. For this purpose he went on a tour among the Barolong tribe, living for ten weeks a nomadic, semi-savage life in the midst of heathen dance and song and dirty, disorderly huts. The unsavory period of exile gained its point, for upon his return he preached a sermon in such excellent Sechuana that Mothibi was dumfounded and could find no criticism to make save that it savored too much of the Serolong dialect.

Some time before Moffat left for his visit to the Barolongs, a baby boy had come to join the family circle at Kuruman, another Robert Moffat by name. In her new house, with three young children to mother, as well as a young settlement to watch over, Mrs. Moffat lived the busy life of a pioneer during those ten weeks while her husband was away.

Photo. Board of Foreign Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church

Photo. London Missionary Society

TREKKING IN SOUTH AFRICA

KURUMAN IN WINTER

Among that little band of missionaries in Bechuanaland there was one whose faith had never wavered, though often her bodily strength was spent. "I may not live to see it, but the awakening will come as surely as the sun will rise to-morrow," said Mrs. Moffat with face aglow. One day a letter arrived from Mrs. Greaves, an old friend in England, asking what gift she could send to help the mission most. The reply of Mary Moffat to that question should be told throughout the world, "wheresoever the gospel shall be preached, as a memorial of her." "Send us a communion service," she wrote; "we shall want it some day." A communion service, when as yet there was not a single convert to join in this love feast of the Christians! But not even the faith of Mary Moffat could quite foresee the thrilling events which were to take place in the Kuruman mission before the arrival of that precious gift from England.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DREAM COME TRUE

I know a land that is sunk in shame,
Of hearts that faint and tire—
And I know of a Name, a Name, a Name,
Can set that land on fire.
Its sound is a brand, its letters flame,
I know of a Name, a Name, a Name,
Will set that land on fire.

"WOMEN AND GIRLS . . . GATHERED AROUND MRS. MOFFAT TO LEARN THE USE OF THE NEEDLE."

XIV

THE DREAM COME TRUE

AARON JOSEPHS was not of Hebrew descent, as his name might imply, but an African freedman from Cape Colony. As a runaway slave, he had been helped by a friendly Englishman to purchase his freedom for the sum of fifteen hundred rix-dollars, which sum he had secured in ivory for the purpose. With his wife and three children, he had subsequently settled on a farm in the interior not far from the Kuruman mission. To educate his children, as well as increase his own proficiency in reading and writing, this ambitious ex-slave left his farm temporarily and came to reside at the mission station. He and his wife were welcome additions to the new and growing community, for they had acquired habits of industry and steadiness from their life in the colony. Moreover, Aaron Josephs brought to his new environment a knowledge of Christian teaching which prepared him for leadership in the Pentecostal experiences which were to follow.

At the end of August, 1828, Mr. Hamilton, who had just made his first trip to the coast since he joined the mission in 1816, returned to his post to find events taking place which seemed to him nothing short of miraculous. The temporary chapel which his hands had helped to build could not begin to hold the people who thronged the services. With astonishing promptness came answers to the questions Moffat asked from the catechism he had translated. In place of stolid indifference, the people turned attentive faces, alert with interest, toward the preacher. Many times the missionary caught traces of tears upon the black faces before him. For an African woman to cry was nothing unusual, since in family and tribal calamities the woman's part was to weep and wail, the man's to brood and plot revenge. But now the scene was changed, and men as well as women shed the unaccustomed tears of penitence.

Moffat and his coworkers were well-nigh prostrated by the glory of this day of awakening for which they had prayed earnestly for seven years. Ever since they had come to Bechuanaland they had preached the Word without effect, and as a

last straw of discouragement came the report that the London Society contemplated closing the mission because it had failed of results. But the vindication had come at last in this strange, melting experience which bowed the hearts of the people before God.

About this time Aaron Josephs came forward and asked to be admitted into the fellowship of Christian believers. On a memorable Sunday this man with his three children received the rite of baptism, together with a little white child, who was christened Robert Moffat. The scene had a peculiar attraction for the black people, and sobs and cries mingled with the tones of the preacher. With characteristic Scotch caution Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Moffat sought to restrain the emotional excitement, but in vain. Tears and loud crying pervaded the crowded room, and with all the interplay of feeling there stirred and grew the consciousness of a Presence, infinitely appealing.

From this hour the people gave themselves unitedly to prayer and song. In many a village hut they met to pray, and when no one was present to voice their petition they sang the three hymns

Moffat had translated into their language. Until late in the evening they lingered together, and, before morning broke, reassembled to begin the day with worship.

With this widespread enthusiasm came a special token of genuineness altogether practical in form. Three men, led by Aaron Josephs, a builder and thatcher by trade, offered their services to build a schoolhouse which should serve as place of worship until a church of adequate size could be erected. Their offer was wholly voluntary, as no one had so much as hinted its desirability. With the plan drawn they would raise the structure entire, save for doors and windows, which to them were unknown features of the builder's art. Only too thankfully did Mr. Hamilton agree to supply these necessities, and forthwith the work was begun. It soon grew to be a community enterprise in which many willing hands helped, women and children carrying clay, laths, and materials for thatch. In the month of May, 1829, the building was completed, the same enthusiasm marking its finish as inspired its beginning. For native Africans, lazy and shiftless by nature and training, to undertake and complete so

extensive a building entirely of their own accord proved that some new and powerful leaven was at work in their lives.

The first Sunday in July marked an epoch in the Bechuana missions. On that day six native Christians, both men and women, were baptized and received into church membership. Before calling his twelve disciples, the Master went into a mountain apart to pray for insight to guide his choice. In like manner the Kuruman missionaries prayed and counseled together in great earnestness before they ventured to select these first Bechuana converts to acknowledge publicly their allegiance to Jesus Christ. Careful examination revealed a simple faith in Christ, particularly in his atoning death, and an understanding remarkably accurate in comparison with their former ignorance.

The day of their baptism was signalized by a large gathering of visitors at Kuruman—Griquas on a hunting expedition and traders from the interior. Moved by a common impulse, they assembled in the new building where the baptismal service and the sermon, delivered with freedom in the Sechuana language, made a profound impression.

But the most striking incident of that day's celebration remains to be told. On the Friday evening before, a box arrived from England, bearing the name of the sender, John Greaves, Esq., of Sheffield. It did not take Mrs. Moffat long to guess the contents of that box nor to remove the shiny communion vessels and pulpit candlesticks for which she had asked two years before when there was no sign that they would ever be needed in Bechuanaland. The box had been twelve months on the way from England and had reached its destination just two days before the first observance of the Lord's Supper in the Kuruman church! "We were as those that dreamed," wrote Moffat afterwards. "The hour had arrived on which the whole energies of our souls had been intensely fixed, when we should see a church, however small, gathered from among a people who had so long boasted that neither Jesus nor we, his servants, should ever see Bechuanas worship and confess him as their King."

The genuineness of the Kuruman revival was put to a still more practical test as the days went by. Women and girls, in motley array, gathered around Mrs. Moffat to learn the use of the needle,

that tiny instrument which perpetually eluded their clumsy fingers accustomed to pickax and hoe. Hitherto woman's sphere of labor had been housebuilding and farming, while to man fell the task of supplying the scanty family wardrobe. To suggest an exchange of occupation was to provoke noisy laughter from women and men. Once Mahuto, the chief's wife, remarked half in jest, half in earnest, that she wished the missionary would give the husbands medicine to make them do the heavy work instead of the wives. But neither Mahuto nor her sister women dreamed that the day would come when, stirred by some potent inner impulse, they would of their own free will seek to acquire the finer arts of human living.

Scarcity of material was the only drawback to the progress of the sewing-school, which had come naturally into existence. The nearest market town was six hundred miles away, and Kuruman was off the regular route of traders. To supply the lack, ornaments, hitherto highly prized, were converted into bullion wherewith to purchase skins of animals. These, in turn, were prepared soft as cloth and made into jackets, trousers, and

gowns. Whenever a trader chanced to come their way, British goods were bought with avidity.

The fashion of wearing clothes spread like a contagious germ among men as well as women. For a man to appear in a pair of trousers was an almost certain sign that he was about to join the ranks of so-called "inquirers." To abandon the custom of painting the body and to wash with water was almost equal to a public renunciation of heathenism.

Mrs. Moffat, the only European woman in the place, was supposed to be an infallible source of wisdom in the clothier's art. Men and women, young and old, appealed to her for instruction. A man would bring prepared skins to be cut into a jacket; another would request a pattern, while a third would exhibit a garment sewed upside down and inquire innocently why it did not fit.

In this transition period many ludicrous sights met the missionaries' eyes. A man might be seen wearing a jacket with one sleeve, a black arm protruding through the other armhole, the inequality being due to shortage of material. Another would proudly don a duffel, or leather jacket, with sleeves of blue, red, or yellow cotton. Joseph's coat of

many colors was often reproduced in the costumes worn that year at Kuruman.

From clothing and cleanliness the reform spread to household furnishings. Chairs, chests, and tables were no longer regarded as doubtful conveniences, not worth the labor expended upon their production. Candles had hitherto been considered the foolish extravagance of Europeans, who burned the fat they might have eaten or used as lubricating oil for their bodies. For Africans it had been pastime enough, when the cows were milked and the day's work was done, to crouch over the smoldering embers by whose light they could see sufficiently to eat and talk. But a new interest had recently come into their lives, a fascinating facility in reading, which must be utilized in the leisure hours of evening. The flickering flame of a wood fire hardly sufficed to light the printed page, and presently candle molds, tallow, and rags for wicks were scrupulously hoarded. On the walls of native huts hung bunches of home-made candles, a sight which gave the missionaries a thrill of satisfaction, for were they not a symbol of the light which was irradiating the darkened minds of their owners?

Before the Moffats had recovered from the first shock of joy over the Bechuana converts, a letter from England brought impressive tidings. At the very time when the people at Kuruman were responding to the gospel message, Christians in England were engaged in especially earnest prayer on their behalf. "What an encouragement to persevere in that important part of Christian duty," said Mary Moffat.

During this same eventful year there came to Kuruman two men from a distant tribe who were the harbingers of an interesting future in which Moffat was to play a leading part. They had come from the great chief, Mosilikatse, king of the Matabele, a ruler strong and despotic, whose subjects bowed in fawning flattery and whose enemies cringed in terror. At his behest these two emissaries had journeyed to Kuruman to study the character and customs of the white people of whom they had heard divers and strange accounts.

In demeanor the visitors bore themselves with a dignity and politeness which bespoke their high rank in a tribe of superior intelligence. Respectful attention was given to every reform due to the white man's ingenuity. The strongly built

houses, garden walls, water ditches, and smith's forge produced an impression which was exhibited not by wild gestures, the African language of surprise, but by serious comment and inquiry. "You are men; we are children," said one with gravity. "Mosilikatse must be taught these things," confirmed the other.

Of the many novel sights at Kuruman none seemed to the visitors quite so unaccountable as the chapel services. There for the first time they saw black men meet together in orderly and quiet behavior; they saw children sitting still and mothers hushing their babies or quietly retiring if their cries could not be subdued. Such decorum could scarcely be comprehended, for among native tribes the public assembly was always interspersed with war-song, dance, and frenzied motion. The Christian hymns which the Bechuanas sang in their own language made a strange appeal to people whose only conception of music was the impassioned outpouring of hatred and revenge.

When the visit neared its end, keen apprehension was felt for the safe return of the Matabele. Rumors were whispered that the Bechuana tribes through whose territory they must pass were

plotting to trap and kill them. The consequences of such a deed were frightful to contemplate, for Mosilikatse would take swift and thorough revenge upon the tribe that dared to murder his ambassadors. What plan could be devised for their protection? The Moffats and Mr. Hamilton were at their wits' end to solve the difficulty and met again and again for counsel and prayer. At length an expediency was hit upon which removed at once the fears of the travelers. Their eyes fairly gleamed with delight at the proposal. Moffat would go himself as pledge of their safety, as far as the Bahurutse territory, from which they could journey in safety to their own domain.

A number of men volunteered to accompany the expedition, which some deemed highly dangerous. At the time of departure the people brought presents to speed their parting guests and to send to Mosilikatse, whose name, before the gospel of good-will had tamed their tribal hatred, would have been pronounced with a curse.

Under circumstances altogether unique Moffat experienced another of those African journeys, of which repetition could never rob the adventure nor the high-pitched peril. Every long trip in

his ox-cart meant to the missionary a new and exciting chapter to add to his volume of dramatic events. But of all his accumulated adventures none quite surpassed in picturesqueness and significance the journey to Mosilikatse, "the Napoleon of the desert," as Moffat learned to call him.

The original plan was for the escort to go as far as Mosega, the Bahurutse town, when the danger zone would be passed. But had they turned back at this point, as they expected, this particular story with its sequel would never have been told. At Mosega the Matabele raised a serious barrier to Mr. Moffat's return. Mosilikatse, they declared, would surely kill them if they permitted the white man to go back without entering the king's presence. Reluctantly Moffat consented to go as far as the cattle outposts of the Matabele, one hundred miles beyond. Beyond Mosega the landscape became exceedingly beautiful, rich in vegetation and traversed by streams flowing eastward to the Indian Ocean. It was a paradise for wild beasts alone, as the once dense population had been wiped out by onslaughts of the Mantatees and Matabele. Now

and then a solitary inhabitant joined the caravan, seeking a bit of food to appease his hunger.

As they approached the first cattle outpost, Moffat espied a large and shapely tree at the entrance of a wooded ravine, between whose branches protruded telltale peaks of thatch. Could it be one of those tree villages of which he had heard? Hastening to the spot he found his surmise correct, for the big tree actually furnished homes for several families of Bajone, remnants of the tribe which once inhabited this fertile land. With a boy's love of adventure which never forsook this grown-up missionary, he promptly climbed the notched trunk to the very top. There he entered a hut, sat down, and ate powdered locusts, which his hostess gladly provided. On his way down he counted seventeen cone-shaped huts, built upon oblong scaffolds seven feet wide, with a small space in front for entrance.

When they returned to the wagons, the old dilemma was renewed. Mr. Moffat pleaded his pressing duties at Kuruman, and the fulfilment of his promise to the Matabele, since, in the language of the country, he had placed them "behind

shields of their nation." For answer, one of the men laid his right hand upon the missionary's shoulder and the left upon his own breast, saying, "Father, you have been our guardian. We are yours; you love us, and will you leave us? Yonder dwells the great Mosilikatse, and how shall we approach his presence if you are not with us? When we shall have told our news, he will ask why our conduct gave you pain to cause your return; and, before the sun descend on the day we see his face, we shall be ordered out for execution because you are not." It was a dramatic scene; the two warrior-like figures standing as suppliants, the missionary bowed in deep perplexity, and the Kuruman attendants looking on as if the destinies of an empire hung in the balance. With irrepressible emotion they heard the decision,—"We must go on."

It was a day never to be forgotten when Mr. Moffat with two attendants left the ox-carts to follow by a more circuitous route, and mounted his horse to go by the direct road into Mosilikatse's town. Straight into the center of the fold they rode, a fold large enough to hold ten thousand head of cattle, but now encircled by eight

hundred warriors in full dress uniform. At the signal to dismount, the riders obeyed, though keeping the bridles in their hands. At that moment two hundred warriors who had been concealed at the entrance rushed into the circle, yelling and brandishing monstrous shields which reached to their chins. The horses nearly broke loose at this demonstration, but the warriors promptly fell into rank with the despatch of trained soldiers. Motionless as statues they stood, with only their white teeth gleaming and their plumes waving. A profound silence fell upon the scene, broken only by the breathing of the horses. Then the war-song broke forth in all its primitive glory, rhythmic and uproarious, vivified by imitations of dying groans and victors' yells. Another pause ensued when from behind the lines marched the monarch himself, followed by a retinue of attendants bearing baskets and bowls of food. Having been taught the European mode of salutation, he extended his hand for a clumsy but well-meaning shake. Turning politely to the food, which had been placed at the visitors' feet, he bade them partake.

At this juncture the wagons were seen ap-

proaching, and Mosilikatse grasped Moffat's arm to escort him to the place of encampment. "The land is before you," he graciously affirmed; "you must sleep where you please." When the "moving houses," as the wagons were called, came nearer, Mosilikatse shrank back in fear at the unaccustomed sight. Were they living creatures of some mammoth species he had never seen? Grasping Moffat more firmly, he advanced with caution to investigate. When the mechanism of the wagon had been explained, he returned to the fold, where his warriors greeted him with noisy acclamation.

Wherever Mosilikatse went, he was attended by fawning minions who sang his praises. "Great King, King of Heaven, the Elephant, the Lion's Paw," were some of the fantastic titles applied to the monarch. His power could hurl mountains from their foundation, boasted his followers. His smile was life and his frown death, they averred with fatal truthfulness.

The first Saturday evening that Moffat spent in this strangest of strange lands, he was approached by King Mosilikatse, who was bent on conversation. Placing his hand upon the mis-

sionary's shoulder, he addressed him in words like these: "*Machobane,*—I call you such because you have been my father—you have made my heart as white as milk. I cease not to wonder at the love of a stranger. You never saw me before, but you love me more than my own people. You fed me when I was hungry, you clothed me when I was naked, and," raising the missionary's arm, "that arm shielded me from my enemies." Whereupon Moffat replied, asking when he had seen him naked or hungry or imperiled? Pointing to the two men whom Moffat had befriended, he said: "These are great men; Umbate is my right hand. When I sent them from my presence to see the land of the white man, I sent my ears, my eyes, my mouth. What they heard, I heard; what they saw, I saw, and what they said, it was Mosilikatse who said it. You fed them and clothed them, and, when they were to be slain, you were their shield. You did it unto me. You did it unto Mosilikatse, son of Machobane."

It was the "love of a stranger" which drew the heathen king unto the Christian missionary with devotion which recalled Afrikaner, the outlaw chieftain. But, unlike Afrikaner, Mosilikatse gave

but vagrant heed to the message the missionary tried repeatedly to make him understand. By way of politeness he would listen to the strange words of his guest until his attention was diverted by droves of sleek cattle approaching the town, to him the supreme concern of life.

It was ten days before Moffat could escape the solicitations of his host and start on the homeward journey. So manifest was the king's affection for his guest that his people declared he must have received a love-potion from the hands of the white man. *"Ra-Mary,"* said he, as they stood by the ox-wagons, "your visit to me seems like a dream; my heart will follow you. Go in peace to Kuruman, and when you come again, bring Ma-Mary with you. Let the road to Kuruman forever remain open." Then, as the wagons moved away, the king and his men sat on the grass chanting a kind of dirge. For some distance Moffat walked behind the ox-carts musing upon the strange experience which had come to him unsought, wondering what it might signify for the extension of the mission he loved.

As they passed beyond the last cattle outpost, the Matabele were left further and further be-

hind, as the travelers drew daily nearer the goal of their journey and their heart's desire, Kuruman. At last the little settlement came into view, the willow trees, the huts along the edge of the valley, the newly built schoolhouse, and finally Moffat's own house and, yes, Mary and the children in the doorway "watching for father."

It was now the new year, for two months had elapsed since Moffat went away in November. The year opened with promise, for interest had steadily deepened, and the converts were proving their steadfastness by many a practical test. Garden products were multiplied beyond the traditional watermelon, beans, and pumpkins of their forefathers to include maize, barley, peas, carrots, and potatoes. New watercourses were built in emulation of the missionaries, and some enterprising folk planted fruit trees. Plows, harrows, and spades were no longer spurned as the implements of degrading toil, but welcomed as the very necessities of existence. Public sentiment had undergone a change in Bechuanaland since the coming of the missionaries.

Early in the year 1830, foundations were laid for the new church, which was to be a substantial

structure of blue limestone, the largest building north of the Orange River. By the light of their tallow candles the people had made such rapid progress in reading that Moffat was spurred to finish and publish his translation of the Gospel of Luke.

There was a turn in the tide of mission affairs in Bechuanaland, and who could measure the force of its incoming? Would it reach perchance to Mosilikatse, peerless king of the desert tribes?

CHAPTER XV

"THE SMOKE OF A THOUSAND VILLAGES"

He cometh unto you with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner.

—Sir Philip Sidney

"HE WAS SPIRITED AWAY TO AUDIENCE HALLS TO ADDRESS GREAT THRONGS OF PEOPLE."

XV

"THE SMOKE OF A THOUSAND VILLAGES"

IN the harbor at Cape Town, where the mountains cast freakish shadows upon the sea, a British ship was receiving her cargo and her passengers for the homeward voyage. A small and ill-equipped craft she was, battered and buffeted by long trips at sea. On this passage she had come all the way from China, carrying soldiers who had served their time in the Opium War. She was now provisioned and ready for the voyage of three months in the Atlantic, when she would measure the length of an entire continent and two thirds of another before reaching her English haven. In the old days of sailing vessels and roundabout routes from continent to continent, every journey meant a long period of travel.

Among the passengers who gathered on deck for the last farewells was an English family well known to the reader, and likewise to the residents

of South Africa, Robert Moffat with his wife and six bonny children. Moffat looked as tall and straight as had the young man who landed in Cape Town twenty-two years before, more sunburnt and hardy, perhaps, with the added look of an explorer and a mystic combined. Mrs. Moffat's face beamed with kindliness and human interest, while her blue eyes spoke of hardihood and purpose to match those of her husband. There were three girls of varying heights and ages, and three lively boys, beginning with Robert, Junior, a lad of twelve. The two youngest, Jim and Jack, prattled incessantly, firing a continuous volley of questions at their long-suffering elders. It was a singularly wide-awake family, with that quickness of perception which a frontier life begets and that strong attachment to one another which isolation tends to develop. Already the thought of England was quickening the heart-beats of the grown folks who had been so long exiled from their native land, while the boys and girls, who knew the home country in fancy alone, were prepared for a grand adventure surpassing all the ox-carts, lions, and wild tribes they had ever encountered.

Since that first landing in the year 1817 Robert Moffat had traveled thousands of miles by ox-cart and on horseback, but not until this day in March, 1839, had he ventured upon the home trail over seas to England. Mary Moffat was likewise a seasoned traveler, for in the last ten years alone she had made five trips from Kuruman to the Cape, more than six thousand miles in an African ox-cart at the rate of fifteen miles a day! The three eldest children, Mary, Ann, and Robert, had been sent to school in the Colony, and every two or three years their mother trekked down from Bechuanaland to attend to their needs. When the ox-cart trailed into Cape Town and she caught sight of Table Mountain and the shiny sea, Mary Moffat lived again that exciting day in December, 1819, when she came, a lonely girl, to join her lover in South Africa. On this day, twenty years later, husband and wife stood together on the deck of the ship which was to bear them again to those familiar scenes where the unquenchable romance of their lives began.

It was a singular predicament which had constrained the Moffats to embark for England at this particularly inopportune time. They had

come down to Cape Town on imperative business; to obtain medical attention, to take the two girls home from school, and to deliver to the printer the complete manuscript of the New Testament which Moffat had translated into Sechuana (the language of the Bechuanas). The Kuruman mission had a printing-press, but it was not adequate for so large an output. Neither was Cape Town better equipped, for not an office in the place could undertake the amount of printing required. It became evident that the manuscript would have to be published in England and that the Moffats would need to go themselves to interpret the unknown hieroglyphics. Accordingly they took passage on the only ship available, although her quarters were cramped, and her date of sailing inconvenient.

Scarcely had the ship left her moorings before trouble came to the Moffat family. Even while crossing Table Bay the mother's crucial hour arrived, and she gave birth to a baby girl. A few hours later, and the ship put to sea in a raging tempest of wind and waves! In the general distress which prevailed, Mrs. Moffat, who lay helpless in her berth, perceived that Jim, the six-year-

old boy, was in serious plight. He had not fully recovered from measles, contracted in Cape Town, and another disease, more critical, had followed in its train. No one was able to nurse the sick boy, for seasickness had prostrated nearly every one on board. In her extremity, Mrs. Moffat asked to have the child laid by her side, and there, while the wind howled and the ship tossed, the little fellow lay upon his mother's arm talking contentedly of the angels who should bear the souls of children to their heavenly home. "Oh, that will be joyful," babbled the childish lips, while his eyes closed dreamily, and he slipped away to join the children at play in the Father's house.

Grief for the little lad mingled with an old grief revived in Mary Moffat's heart by the expectation of returning to her girlhood home. Far back in the years and far back also in the interior of Africa a letter had come from England with the dreaded tidings that Mrs. Smith, Mary's mother, had died. Six years from the time that her daughter left the stone house in Dukinfield, the mother went out on the journey from which there is no return. With added tenderness Mrs. Moffat gath-

ered her little brood about her in the ship's cabin and told them anew of the grandparents they were soon to see. In the family circle in Scotland there was likewise a vacant place, for Robert's brother, Alexander, with whom he used to trudge to school in Falkirk, had been invalided and sent home from the East to die a soldier's death. Twenty years had made another gap in the ranks, for the name of the Reverend William Roby could no longer be posted on roadside bulletins to capture the gaze of dreaming boys. He too had died before his protégé returned from Africa to tell the thrilling story of the work he had done.

A touch of strangeness fell upon Robert and Mary as their ship glided into the harbor at Cowes and cast anchor to await orders from London, after the leisurely custom of olden times. Were they coming home or had they left home far, far behind? Was it the soft green shores of England or the rugged coastline of South Africa which betokened that magic spot called home?

From the irksome life on shipboard Mrs. Moffat and the children hastened eagerly on shore, there to be welcomed by the very friends

in whose hospitable home Mary Smith had been a guest twenty years before. Moffat lingered on the ship, ostensibly to attend to the luggage and write letters, but in reality overcome by shyness at the thought of entering again the life and scenes to which he had become a stranger. Little did the half-homesick missionary suspect the tremendous welcome which was awaiting him in his unfamiliar native land.

In a few days the ship was ordered to London and was towed by a steam tug up the Thames, a novel experience for father and mother as well as for Jack and Robert and all the rest of the South African family. Scarcely had the missionary escaped the tribulations of the custom-house when the surprise of his life began. He was spirited away to audience halls to address great throngs of people who assembled at the mere magic of the name Robert Moffat. There could not have been a more opportune time for him to come home, for Christian England had been stirred as never before, and perhaps never since, over the needs of the world for Jesus Christ. Missionaries from various quarters of the globe had in recent years returned to Britain, among

ered her little brood about her in the ship's cabin and told them anew of the grandparents they were soon to see. In the family circle in Scotland there was likewise a vacant place, for Robert's brother, Alexander, with whom he used to trudge to school in Falkirk, had been invalided and sent home from the East to die a soldier's death. Twenty years had made another gap in the ranks, for the name of the Reverend William Roby could no longer be posted on roadside bulletins to capture the gaze of dreaming boys. He too had died before his protégé returned from Africa to tell the thrilling story of the work he had done.

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the tone of living. Many young men and women were led by his appeal to accept Christ and to give their lives in definite Christian service at home and abroad. Among them was a young Scotch preacher, named William Ross, who went, not long after, to the Moffats' own mission in Bechuanaland.

It was Moffat's influence that constrained another Scotchman to give his life to Africa, a young doctor and scientist who was destined to become the peerless missionary of all time. It was in a boarding-house in Aldersgate Street, London, that Robert Moffat became acquainted with David Livingstone. The young man had finished his theological and medical studies and was waiting for the Opium War to end, that he might go as a medical missionary to China. Meantime there came into his life that clear-cut, indomitable personality who had braved the wilds of Africa and wrought civilization out of savagery. Every time Robert Moffat addressed a public assembly, David Livingstone was there to hear. Gradually he began to waylay the older man with one question after another, until finally he ventured upon the crucial inquiry toward which all his interest

had been tending. Would he do, did Mr. Moffat think, as a missionary for Africa? "Yes," came the answer in no uncertain tones, "particularly if you will not go to an old station but will push on into unoccupied fields." Neither man realized the prophecy contained in those words of challenge. "In the north," continued the missionary, his eyes blazing with the vividness of recollection, "I have seen in the morning sun the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been." "The smoke of a thousand villages!" David Livingstone brooded thoughtfully over the words. At last, with characteristic directness, he said, "What is the use of my waiting here for the end of this abominable Opium War? I will go at once to Africa."

And to Africa he went at the end of the year 1840, in company with William Ross, the young minister from Scotland. Now Mr. Ross had taken unto himself a wife to share the vicissitudes of his lot, but Dr. Livingstone was firmly resolved upon a bachelor career, despite the motherly advice of Mrs. Moffat. He was fixed in his belief that an unmarried man could do better service in Africa, but Mrs. Moffat knew otherwise, for had

not her own Robert suffered unnecessary hardship of body and mind as a lonely bachelor in Afrikaner's kraal? David Livingstone was destined to change his mind not long hence in those halcyon days of reunion at Kuruman.

Meanwhile the prolonged stay in England brought no holiday to the Moffat family, but rather a work-day as strenuous as the Bechuana mission itself. "Long as our visit to England is," wrote Mrs. Moffat to Mr. Hamilton at Kuruman, "it is a state of constant excitement, bustle, and anxiety. I long for my own home. I long to see the spot again where we have so long toiled and suffered, for though loaded with the kindness of friends and welcome everywhere, still home is homely (homelike)."

When the Moffats arrived in England in the summer of 1839, they had expected to rush the printing through and slip away to Africa before winter. But alas for the frailty of human expectations! The English public clamored imperiously for Moffat's presence on the platform, and after he had spoken in almost every town in the kingdom, they clamored for a book in which they could read the story of his

exploits after he himself had gone from their hearing. Between speaking engagements he read proof sheets of the New Testament and translated into Sechuana the entire Book of Psalms, working sometimes until late in the night and arising early next day to set forth upon a round of meetings. When David Livingstone and William Ross sailed for Africa, they carried five hundred copies of the newly printed New Testament. A few months later, and five times that number were sent to Kuruman, each volume containing the New Testament and Psalms in Sechuana.

In the spring of 1842 another manuscript was finished and published under the title, *Labors and Scenes in South Africa,* a closely written narrative, rich in anecdote and ethnic research. Scarcely had the last proof sheets left the writer's hand before he was swept again into a torrent of public meetings which continued until the departure for Africa the next January. For the last two months enthusiasm was sustained at a high pitch. In Edinburgh clergymen and leading men assembled to present a set of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* to the Reverend Mr. Moffat, "as an expression of

affectionate regard from friends of different Christian denominations." "Your visit to us we can never forget," said the chairman in his presentation speech. "The time when you spoke to us will be as a sunny spot on the dusty and troubled road along which we have to journey. We have reaped a real and pure pleasure from the pictures you have given us of missionary life—your romantic adventures, your hairbreadth escapes, your bold exertions, your surprising successes. You have opened before us a new page of human society and character."

From Edinburgh he was hurried on to Newcastle, there to receive a set of scientific instruments for use in revealing the wonders of natural law to the natives of South Africa. Before he left Scotland there was another flying visit to Inverkeithing, where a proud and wistful mother parted for the last time with her famous son. Then down to Manchester, the city where his boyish battles for love and loyalty had been fought and won, where, likewise, Mary Smith had faced the peculiar problems of her girlhood life! How strange it seemed for those two to trace again the old, familiar ways after all the changes the years

had brought! Dukinfield nursery no longer offered a welcome to the one-time gardener, for infirmity and financial misfortune had forced Mr. Smith to leave the stone house, and to take up his abode in a cottage at Flixton. There Mary Moffat spent long fragments of her English visit, and there took place a parting tinged with particular sadness and anxiety.

At the historic, far-famed London Bridge, the Moffat family, attended by a host of friends, embarked on a steamer which was to convey them to the ship at Gravesend. There on shipboard came the final, excruciating farewell, for upon the shoulders of our missionaries had fallen at last that peculiar and goading cross which the foreign missionary cannot hope to avoid. They must leave the children behind in the homeland for the education which the non-Christian country must ever fail to supply. Mary and Ann, the eldest, with Jack, Elizabeth, and Jane, the three youngest, were to return with their parents to South Africa, but Robert and Helen, aged sixteen and fourteen, were to stay in England. With pale, stricken faces the boy and girl watched the distance widen between themselves and the ship which was bear-

ing father, mother, brother, and sisters far away to Africa. It was twenty-seven years before Helen Moffat saw her parents again!

Under the gallant name of *Fortitude* the ship braved wind and wave until she sighted Table Mountain and sailed again into the rugged harbor of Cape Town. From there the Moffats went by coasting schooner to Algoa Bay, where they waited, until even their rare patience was exhausted, for the arrival of their baggage shipped on a slow sailing vessel from England. When, after months of delay, the tardy craft appeared in the bay, it was but to tantalize the travelers, for it was several days before she could make a landing, owing to the storm which prevailed. All one night Moffat paced the beach while the gale tossed four vessels in wrecks upon the shore. In the morning he found, to his relief, that the *Agrippina* had held fast to her moorings and the precious cargo was safe.

At last the wagons were loaded, and the caravan was ready to start. The long spans of oxen wound over the sandy plains, the "crew" uttered their weird yells, the long whips cracked like rifle shots, and the covered wagons creaked gleefully

as the returning missionaries trekked slowly but steadily toward home. At the Orange River, that reminder of many an exciting escapade in days past, they came upon a new device for transportation, a pontoon, or floating bridge, extended across stream. It was a happy improvement upon the tricky and uncertain method of fording, but what if our travelers could have seen, even in fancy, that immense iron bridge which now spans the river, and over which the railroad passes on its famous route "from Cape to Cairo"!

A few more outspannings and inspannings, and they came to another stream, crossable by fords only, the Vaal River. Before they reached its banks, they caught sight of a solitary figure on horseback, coming forward through the wilderness as if on purpose to meet them. "Dr. Livingstone," cried the Moffats in high glee! And Dr. Livingstone it was who had ridden all the one hundred and fifty miles from Kuruman to greet the returning travelers. Was there a girlish heart, think you, that beat tremulously as those keen, gray eyes flashed a welcome into her own?

Beyond the Vaal the return was a triumphal procession, for day by day old friends met them

with fresh relays of oxen to speed them on their way. As they drew near to Kuruman, their advance was more like a royal progress, for no king could have received more genuine homage from his subjects than these missionaries from their native peoples. When the last stage of the journey was reached, impatience could brook no delay, and without stopping for the night, they kept on, on, until at three o'clock in the morning of the tenth day of December, 1843, the long caravan passed under the Babylonian willows into the long-lost home, Kuruman.

Even at that unseemly hour crowds gathered to welcome them, and the next day and for many days and weeks thereafter people came from near and far to look into the loved faces which they had begun to think they should never see again. Among the visitors came a bent and bowed figure, about whom lingered a wistful suggestion of past glory. It was Mothibi, chief of the Batlapings, in whose village at Lattakoo the missionaries had spent so many harrowing years. He and his wife, Mahuto, had never joined the new settlement at Kuruman, but had drifted away to the southeast, grieved and disappointed over the

death of Peclo, their first-born, and alienated from the region where he had died. While the Moffats were absent in England, Mothibi had come to Kuruman to acknowledge at last, after all his years of vacillation and indifference, his allegiance to the Christian's God. It was a touching scene when Mothibi, with Mahuto, his wife, alighted from their ox-cart and proceeded to the Moffats' house, to express with rapture their thanks to God for having brought the missionaries safely home.

Meanwhile the new recruits, William Ross and David Livingstone, prospected for new sites in the regions beyond, Mr. and Mrs. Ross choosing the village of Taung, one hundred miles to the east, and Dr. Livingstone the Bakhatla tribe, two hundred miles to the north. There in the forest primeval he built his hut in a valley called *Mabotsa,* "a marriage feast."

CHAPTER XVI

THE ALMOND-TREE OF KURUMAN

I shall not swerve a hairbreadth from my work while life is spared.—*David Livingstone.*

"THERE . . . MARY PLEDGED HIM HER LOVE AND LOYALTY WHILE LIFE SHOULD LAST."

XVI

THE ALMOND-TREE OF KURUMAN

UNSET is the "very witching time" of day to those who catch its spell. The daytime clamor is hushed, the practical mood of toil subsides, and into the world of young loves, ardent hopes, and old griefs flits the unspoiled spirit of man. It is the precious hour of ingathering, when the treasures of life, its romance, and its immortal faith are garnered anew to enrich the labor of the morrow.

It was at this enchanted hour between daylight and dark when affairs at Kuruman took on a new coloring of hope and significance, when the measure of the day's toil was computed and the unfinished task defined. On a little hill overlooking the town, the three missionary families met regularly for evening prayers and counsel. Before them stretched the smiling valley which their own efforts had transformed from a reedy morass into a land of plenty. Upon the hills surrounding the valley were perched the native villages with prim-

itive, cone-shaped huts interspersed with cottages of semi-European design. It was a singularly tranquil scene. The light blue smoke rose in the still air, the cattle came slowly home to the folds, the Bechuana boys took their evening canter upon the backs of their young oxen, and the old men talked of the days past when the Kuruman valley was the haunt of the wild Bushmen with their poisoned arrows. What a miracle of beauty had been wrought out of desolation! Along the valley's edge ran the watercourses, overhung with gray willows and dark green syringa trees with their sweet-scented blossoms. The pomegranate hedge with its scarlet flowers, the orange and fig trees, the well-ordered gardens of corn, maize, and native grain, all formed a lovely tropical background for the stately stone church, and the well-built mission houses and school. The missionary who had once been a gardener in the scrupulously kept estates of England had transferred his skill to the untamed wilderness of South Africa, and behold the result!

Long ago when Robert and Mary Moffat came as bride and groom to the squalid village of Lattakoo, with its tangled thorn hedge, its straw huts,

and its barren land, they dared to dream of the day when a bit of green, luxuriant England should be transplanted into sandy, sterile Africa. To few mortals is the blessed boon given to see the dream of one's life come so completely true as it did for our two missionaries in Bechuanaland.

The mission station at Kuruman had become in the course of years a center of influence and hospitality for the whole region north of Cape Colony. It served as a kind of mother station to a number of infant missions born in recent years in the country north of the Vaal River. Supplies of books, food, and clothing, as well as the more needed commodity, practical advice, were always forthcoming from the veteran family at Kuruman to the new missionaries in the interior. Not only missionaries but travelers and traders shared the benefit of that Christian home. "Dear old Kuruman!" wrote Mr. Oswell, a well-known explorer, "you were a very oasis, peopled with the kindest friends. My short visits to you were among the happiest of my life; no little kingdom ever had a better king and queen, no home a better host and hostess. How well I remember the exquisite arrangement and order of the mother's household,

the affectionate interest in the wayfarers, and the father's courtly hospitality and kindly advice, and the ready willingness with which he lent himself to smooth our difficulties and help us on our way. Without Mr. Moffat's aid we should have fared but poorly; with it the stones were taken out of the path."

Under the great almond-tree at Kuruman, which blossoms to this day, there was enacted a scene of true springtime flavor. At many a "witching hour" a young man and woman sat together under that tree, lost in the enchantment of each other's society. The man had blue-gray eyes, in which, as history tells us, no man ever saw fear, but in which the maiden by his side saw the dream light of love. He had the aspect of a soldier wounded in the war, for his left arm hung limp from the shoulder and his face bore the marks of pain stoically endured. It was David Livingstone, who had come down from Mabotsa after that famous encounter with the lion of which story-books delight to tell. He had followed the tribe on a lion hunt, and a gigantic lion, the largest ever seen by the natives, sprang upon him in the frenzy of dying rage. The animal's great teeth

crunched the doctor's left shoulder, shattering the bone to splinters, and leaving eleven tooth-marks upon his arm. Just as the monstrous paw struck his head, a native fired a shot, thereby diverting the beast's attention and nearly losing his own life in the desperate game. To his dying day David Livingstone carried a crippled arm which gave him excruciating pain every time he lifted a fowling-piece to his shoulder.

After the accident he went down to Kuruman to secure healing for his wounded arm and solace for his wounded heart. There under the almond-tree the latter cure was wrought, for there Mary, the oldest daughter of the Moffats, pledged him her love and loyalty while life should last. The high destiny of her womanhood was fulfilled in that hour when David Livingstone asked her to be his wife.

Another cord stretched from Kuruman to the wilderness front when Mary Livingstone began her pioneer career in the house which her husband had built for her at Mabotsa, "every brick and every stick being put square by my own right hand," as he laughingly boasted. In the adventures of the bridal pair Mrs. Moffat lived anew her

early married life in the heathen surroundings of Lattakoo. At Mabotsa, Chonuane, Kolobeng, and in the ox-cart which made that matchless trek across the Kalahari Desert to Lake Ngami, Mrs. Livingstone, like her mother, gave her life a willing sacrifice for the sake of the man she loved and the cause they served.

While David Livingstone was discovering worlds unknown in the mysterious depths of central Africa, Robert Moffat was performing a wonderful exploit of his own down in his study at Kuruman. He was translating the Old Testament into Sechuana, hoping, before he died, to give the whole Bible to the people in their native speech.

It was a "great and terrible labor," as the novelist Balzac once said of his life-work. Had Moffat been a student of Greek and Hebrew, the task would have been simplified, but the meagerness of his early education increased the difficulties as well as the marvel of the achievement. Before transcribing even one short verse, he compared several translations in order to catch the meaning nearest the original. Sometimes he would spend a whole forenoon upon two or three

verses, searching in lexicons, versions, and commentaries for the exact significance. His head suffered disastrously from the terrific strain, giving him pain night and day except when his troubles were forgotten in the fascination of his task. Pain, perplexities, and, worst of all, interruptions every day and all day, as sudden as they were imperious! These were the obstacles through which the translator fought his way to the goal. In the year 1857 the last verse was recorded, and lo, his work of nearly thirty years was done! He himself was staggered by the realization. "I feel it to be an awful thing to translate the Book of God," he wrote. "When I had finished the last verse, I could hardly believe that I was in the world, so difficult was it for me to realize that my work of so many years was completed. A feeling came over me as if I should die. My heart beat like the strokes of a hammer. My sensations found vent by my falling on my knees and thanking God for his grace and goodness in giving me strength to accomplish my task."

Scarcely had the last sheets of the Old Testament come from the press before Moffat was off in his ox-cart to visit his old friend Mosilikatse, now

hiding with his tribe in the wild and inaccessible region south of the Zambezi.

Incursions of Dutch Boers into native territory had driven this warrior chieftain, the "hero of a hundred fights," into flight toward the northeast and into a tribal isolation well-nigh impenetrable. Once before, Moffat had worked his way through an uncharted wilderness to the haunts of Mosilikatse at the call of the chieftain to "Ra-Mary." This time, however, his journey was planned in far-away England. After David Livingstone had made his famous trek across continent from the east to the west coast and back again, he had sailed home to England to join his wife and plan even vaster explorations in Africa. His presence aroused new interest in the native tribes and led the London Missionary Society to appoint missionaries for the Makololo and Matabele, who lived in the marshes and forests of central Africa. As a result of this decision Moffat was asked by the directors to go for a year to the Matabele, Mosilikatse's tribe, and there, with the help of two younger men, establish a permanent mission.

It was a staggering proposition. Moffat was

over sixty years of age and had spent forty years in hard work for the missionary society. To accept the proposal of the directors meant he must live again the toil and hardship of his early years at Lattakoo. To become a pioneer at the age of sixty-two is no easy feat to perform. The unfettered daring of youth has spent itself by the time a man reaches middle life. But Robert Moffat, by the constant use of his faculties in adventurous tasks, had kept alive within him the intrepid spirit of boyhood. In two days his mind was made up. "I will go," he said, "but I must start at once and first prepare the minds of Mosilikatse and his people for the coming among them of missionaries, and explain to them the whole plan." So off he went on a preliminary trek of seven hundred miles and back to negotiate a welcome for the future missionaries. "Yes," said Mosilikatse, "the missionaries may come, but my friend 'Ra-Mary' must come himself. These new men, I do not know them. All men are not alike." Suspicion had fallen upon all white people since the Boers began their wanton assaults upon the native tribes. Once admit the white settlers, and the Boers and destruction were sure to follow. Thus

reasoned the native mind, not without some foundation in fact.

In the year 1859 new missionaries had arrived from England, and, with Moffat and his son John, were ready to begin their emigration to the far frontier. It was a slow and laborious trek, for the carts had to carry heavy loads to furnish homes seven hundred miles removed from the nearest shop. By night and day the wagons struggled across the Kalahari, until they drew up at last under the shadow of the Bamangwato Mountains. From this point the sandy route merged into a tangled forest trail along which the ox-carts wound single file, beating their slow way through the grassy undergrowth. Scouts went on ahead to choose the path which sometimes circled around monstrous ant hills, stones, and stumps. At times when the forest became particularly dense a halt was called, and all hands, black and white, wielded the pickax and blazed a trail. Foremost in these exertions was their veteran guide, Robert Moffat, who was here, there, and everywhere in turn, possessed of the energy of three men. No step was more elastic, no figure more erect, than that of the missionary who for

forty-three years had trekked over the African veld, dug watercourses, reclaimed the stubborn soil, built houses and even a stately stone church, and translated the entire Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress* into a language which he himself had reduced to written form!

It was a trek of three months before the travelers came at last to the camp of Mosilikatse, hidden in a gloomy forest on the banks of the Impembezi River. There, in the king's court, "Ra-Mary" received his old-time friendly welcome, but toward the missionaries who had come to stay the chief's attitude was enigmatical, to say the least. As settlers, they were naturally eager to plant their gardens before the rainy season began, but the chief evaded and procrastinated whenever Moffat urged the selection of a site for the mission station. Like the first missionaries in Mothibi's kraal, they were kept waiting for permission to settle. Meanwhile the tropical heat and thunderstorms of summer overtook them while they had no other shelter than the canvas tilts of their wagons and the tents they had pitched. The patience and tact of their leader

were never more sorely tried than in those days and weeks of unexplained waiting.

It was the climax of perplexity when, without warning, chief and people broke camp and stole away into the forest. The missionaries were told that men would be sent to escort them to the new settlement, and with that promise they had to console themselves a fortnight longer, while their supplies decreased daily. Never had Moffat been given a more difficult problem to solve. Beset by doubts, himself, and chafing under the enforced inaction, he had to bolster up the failing courage of his companions, who thought it a waste of time to linger in the camp of a reluctant chieftain, when other chiefs and other tribes were ready to give them welcome.

One day in December, two months after their first arrival, the evil spell was broken by the approach of two headmen, whose smiling faces betokened good news at last. The chief was on his way to Inyati, they announced, and had sent two teams of oxen to transport the missionaries thither. No time was lost in preparation. Tents were struck, wagons were loaded, and they were off on the trek, with the zest of boys dismissed

from school. It was the day after Christmas when their ox-carts drew up at the kraal of Inyati and each man chose a tree under which to pitch his tent and, perchance, later to build his house. As Moffat had suspected, Mosilikatse and his tribe had been fighting the old fear of Boer invasion and debating the wisdom of allowing the missionaries to remain. With this point settled, the most crucial stage of the undertaking was safely passed. There remained, however, other and heavy labor for Moffat to perform before he could retrace his way through the forest jungle to Mary and the two daughters who were left behind at Kuruman.

The permanent settlement at Inyati was begun, and early and late the veteran missionary was at work, now at the sawpit, then at the blacksmith's forge or carpenter's bench, or wherever his many-sided skill could serve a need. Besides the manual labor he must allow for hours spent in the chief's company, when he sought in vain to establish connections with Dr. Livingstone's expedition on the Zambezi. It was only after long persuasion that Mosilikatse agreed to send carriers to Victoria Falls with mail for the new missionaries

among the Makololo. Isolation had been the watchword of the Matabele for twenty years. But one trail to the outside world was kept open, and that led to "Ra-Mary's" home at Kuruman, for along that trail no evil was likely to travel.

When June came to the forests of Inyati, Moffat knew that his task was fully done and he was free to go home. On a Sunday morning he walked along the narrow path to the chief's kraal to speak for the last time with Mosilikatse and his people. There in the courtyard the old, familiar scene was enacted; the word of command was given; the warriors filed in and seated themselves in a semicircle on the ground; the women crouched behind huts and trees to listen to the farewell message of "Ra-Mary," the first white man they had ever known and loved. Moffat knew it was the last time he would face this black audience, for never again could he come to the kraal of Mosilikatse. Younger hands than his would minister to the people's needs, younger voices than his would teach them the way of eternal life. It was a solemn scene, the climax of many urgent appeals to chief and tribe to give their allegiance to the great Chief who knew no white or black. On the

morrow the ox-carts vanished down the forest trail, and Mosilikatse saw his friend "Ra-Mary" no more.

In the fever-stricken territory of the Zambezi, beyond the haunts of the Matabele and the Makololo, another missionary fought the hardest battle of his whole embattled life. There in the village of Shupanga, David Livingstone struggled with wild grief, for Mary, his beloved wife, lay dying. Beside her rude bed, made of boxes but covered with a soft mattress, watched "the man who had faced so many deaths and braved so many dangers, but who was now utterly broken down and weeping like a child." From the hour of Mary's death those blue-gray eyes which never showed fear carried a grief which time could not efface. In the journal which this lonely man made his confidant were written these plaintive words: "I loved her when I married her, and the longer I lived with her I loved her the more. Oh, my Mary, my Mary! how often we have longed for a quiet home since you and I were cast adrift at Kolobeng."

Under the almond-tree at Kuruman, where children's play and the romance of youth were once enacted, loneliness and grief came to take up their

abode. But in the lives of Robert and Mary Moffat grief never expelled thankfulness, nor loneliness and old age the romance of true love. With Scotch intensity they mourned the loss of their first-born, but with Christian loyalty they rejoiced that her life had been laid down in sacrifice for the cause they loved.

Children and grandchildren came and went under the great almond-tree; the prattle of childish voices was now heard and then lost in the march of the years; but through all the changes wrought by time Robert and Mary worked on undismayed, "the strength of two being always felt in each one's power." "Robert can never say I hindered him in his work," remarked Mrs. Moffat in the mission house in London upon their final return to England. "No, indeed," affirmed her husband, "but I can tell you she has often sent me away from house and home for months together for evangelizing purposes and in my absence has managed the station as well as or better than I could myself."

Meanwhile David Livingstone vanished into the depths of the great continent, crying as he went, "I will open up a path into the interior or perish."

CHAPTER XVII

THE REVEILLE

I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity; do you carry out the work which I have begun. I leave it with you.—*David Livingstone.*

"THROUGH ALL THE MEMORIES OF THE PAST . . .

ROBERT MOFFAT DREAMED ANEW THE FUTURE OF HIS ADOPTED COUNTRY."

XVII

THE REVEILLE

IT was a little gray and green village on the banks of the River Carron, near the Firth of Forth, a genuine little Scotch town, like Thrums and Drumtochty. Stone cottages, built close to the ground and close to one another, cuddled under the big trees which shaded the village street. In the midst of ampler grounds, bordering the parish kirk, stood the manse, a more pretentious structure than its neighbors, surrounded by a mass of shrubbery and a vine-clad garden wall. Collier boys played at "pitch-and-toss" on the village green, while smaller children clustered in the stone doorways of their cottage homes. It was one of those quaint, appealing little communities, with a spicy flavor of human interest, which every lover of Scotland is quick to catch. "Once the lights of a little town are lit, who could ever hope to tell all its story, or the story of a single *wynd* in it. And who, looking at

lighted windows, needs to turn to books?'' Thus wrote the story-teller of Thrums.

One autumn day in the year 1872 two men drove up to the village green in Carronshore and looked about inquiringly. The elder had a baffled look, as if hunting for something he desired supremely and could not find. Wistfully he scanned the cottages, the roadways, the truck-lines leading to the coal-pits, and shook his head in disillusionment. Nothing looked natural to the man who had come back after sixty-three years to revisit his boyhood home. At last he caught sight of a red-tiled cottage near some old storehouses, and his eyes flashed with the delight of recognition. It was the very house in which he had lived as a boy. With that landmark identified, the whole place became gradually familiar, the village green, the favorite nooks for play, the river winding behind the town, and here and there the homes of one-time playmates. Had they all vanished, those companions of bygone years, or could he detect the boy or girl he used to know under the guise, perchance, of yonder tailor sewing busily in his shop, or that little old-fashioned figure running breathlessly across the green?

Even as he pondered the discoveries it might be his lot to make, the little figure drew nearer, and a woman clad in the quaint Scotch attire of short skirt, short gown, and *mutch* seized him by both hands and gazed rapturously into his face. Haste, excitement, and chronic asthma combined had bereft her of the power of speech, until at last she gasped the words, "Are—you—really—the great Moffat?"

"Well, I believe I must be the person you refer to, whether great or not," answered the tall old man with a kindly smile, "but why do you ask?"

"Why! Because I was at the schule wi' ye. —My name is Mary Kay, and you'll surely come to mind me; I sat in the class next ye, and ye often helped me wi' my lessons. I have aye keepit my e'e on you since you left Carronshore, and I'll let you see a lot of your ain likenesses. I was aye sure you would come back to this place some day; and though I didna expect ye the noo, I'm fair daft wi' joy at seeing ye."

It was a proud moment for Mary Kay when she guided about the town the man on whom she had "keepit her e'e" for sixty years. First, she led him to the red-tiled cottage where the Moffat

family had lived so long ago. What a drift of memories the old house brought! "Our eight-day clock stood here," said Moffat, as he looked about the room which neither time nor occupation by others had wholly altered. "The *girnel* (oat-meal chest) stood there, and the *aumrie* (cup-board) in that corner." And then with a catch in his voice he recalled the winter evenings, when, behind the "lighted windows" and before that very fireside, he sat with his brothers and sisters, knitting in hand, listening to the stories of the Moravian missionaries which the mother was wont to tell her little brood. It was that Scotch fireside which had sent him out to South Africa to live again those hero tales for the space of fifty years.

From the red-tiled cottage Mary Kay led her guests to her own humble home, where she produced Moffat's "ain likenesses," safely stowed away in the leaves of an ancient volume of Baxter's *Saints' Rest.* They were woodcut pictures of Robert Moffat, clipped from magazines and hoarded as priceless treasures. "They were all faithful likenesses," she avowed, "and were even like him yet, except that he had grown a terribly lang beard, and she never could thole these lang

beards; although," she added apologetically, "to be sure, John Knox had a lang beard, just like yersel'."

Were there other of his schoolmates still living in Carronshore, Moffat sought to know? Mary Kay could think of but one, and she, alas, was away on a visit to her grandchildren at Greenock. But hold, there was a master tailor in the place, Andrew Johnstone by name. He might perhaps remember. They would go and see.

The tailor sat cross-legged on his board plying his needle industriously, as the visitors entered his shop.

"Andrew, man," exclaimed Mary Kay by way of introduction, "here's Moffat come to see you, the great missionary from Africa."

"Aye, aye, maybe he is," was the gruff response, "but there are plenty of folks ganging about the country noo-a-days passin' themselves off as great men, and they are just a wheen impostors."

Somewhat abashed by this chilly reception, Mary Kay expostulated: "O man, Andrew, are you no believin' me? and I've kenned him mysel' a' my days."

Whereupon Andrew stopped sewing, looked scrutinizingly at Moffat and remarked in the tone of a judge pronouncing sentence, "Are you aware, sir, that if you were really the person you represent yourself to be, you would be the father-in-law of Livingstone, the African explorer?"

"And so I am," was the quiet rejoinder.

At those words the crossed legs straightened into the perpendicular, and Andrew stood upon his feet, lifting his spectacles for a clearer view of his amazing guest. "Is it possible that the father-in-law of Livingstone stands before me and under my humble roof?" he said with awe. From that moment his doubts were dispelled, and he strove by further expressions of respect to atone for his crusty welcome.

Meanwhile a crowd of collier boys and other villagers had gathered about the tailor's door for a glimpse of their distinguished visitor. Perceiving the eager faces, Moffat went quickly out of the house and stood in their midst, while he told them stirring anecdotes of his life in South Africa. Before he drove away from town to return with his friend to Stirling, where he was visiting, he promised to come back and tell them longer

ROBERT AND MARY MOFFAT, TWO CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS WHO, IN THE EVENING OF LIFE, LAID DOWN THE BURDEN THEY HAD BORNE THROUGH FORTY YEARS OF SACRIFICIAL SERVICE

Photos. London Missionary Society

stories about the black people of Bechuanaland. That promise was more than once redeemed.

It is a long way to go from the village on the banks of the Carron in Scotland to that other village on the banks of the Kuruman in South Africa, a long way in miles and a long way in experience. But the longest and the hardest way by far is that which leads back to Britain after one's work in Africa is done. It is not coming home then, but leaving home, the home of fifty years.

When, in the year 1870, Robert and Mary Moffat had stepped out of their house at Kuruman, the house in which they had lived for forty years, and walked to the ox-wagon which was to take them to the coast, throngs of black people had blocked the way, each striving for one last clasp of the hand, one last comforting word before their beloved leaders should go forever from their sight. As the wagon crept down the shaded street and away toward the south, all the people in the village who were able to walk followed close behind until they could go no further. Then it was that a long, mournful wail rose in the air, a haunting token of the black man's grief.

Yes, Robert and Mary Moffat had returned to England, leaving their own son, John, in charge of the mission at Kuruman. A few days after Christmas of that same year, in the cold of a northern winter to which she was not inured, Mary Moffat went out on her last voyage of discovery, leaving Robert behind in the land of his birth. The night before she died, she prayed audibly and clearly that if it were God's will to take her she might be willing to go, and that her husband might have strength given him to bear her leaving, and that his way might be made plain. Unto the very last her thought was for him to whom she had given her love so many years before in the stone house at Dukinfield. This time it was Mary who must go, and Robert who must stay, and God pity the lonely man who cried in his anguish, "For fifty-three years I have had her to pray for me!"

After Mary's death, Robert Moffat lived for twelve years a busy and varied life in England and Scotland, surrounded by children and grandchildren, and friends of all ages and ranks. Signal honors were heaped upon him, but to Robert Moffat "it was all the same where he was or with

whom he spoke." Twice he was presented to Queen Victoria at her own request; twice he breakfasted with Gladstone; once he lectured in the great nave at Westminster by invitation of Dean Stanley; the Lord Mayor of London gave a dinner in the Egyptian Hall in his honor; the senate of Edinburgh University conferred upon him the degree of doctor of divinity; the freedom of the city of London became his privilege; and loyal friends presented him with a gift of money totaling more than five thousand pounds, besides the generous sum donated for Moffat Institute, the training-school for African workers to be established at Kuruman. Yet, withal, he could

> Walk with kings—nor lose the common touch,
> And all men counted with him, but none too much.

The picturesque figure of Robert Moffat, the veteran missionary, was constantly seen upon the lecture platform, for, as he often said, "people either could not or would not see that he was getting old." Once he crossed to Paris at the invitation of the French Missionary Society and there addressed an audience of four thousand Sunday-school children. Up and down the United

Kingdom from Gosport to Edinburgh, from Dundee to London, he pleaded, with voice still strong and compelling, for the land of his adoption in South Africa. When the aged man, with his long white beard and the touch of majesty about his bearing, walked with firm tread up the aisle, the whole audience would rise simultaneously to its feet to pay him homage. Nowhere was this demonstration more appealing in its spontaneity than in Manchester, the city where Robert Moffat and Mary Smith once dedicated their young lives to missionary service. To Manchester the feet of the lonely missionary often turned, with the wistfulness of home-coming, and there in its halls and homes his voice was often heard.

It was in the chief city of the realm and the most historic edifice in Britain that Robert Moffat received the culminating honor of his life, and, paradoxical as it may sound, the honor which befell him there, befell not him but another. On that April day, as the Thames flowed gray and swift by the Embankment, David Livingstone, missionary and explorer, was buried in Westminster Abbey, the "silent meeting-place of the great dead of eight centuries."

Open the Abbey doors and bear him in
To sleep with king and statesman, chief and sage,
The missionary come of weaver-kin,
But great by work that brooks no lower wage.

Under the dim, wonderful arches, in the beauty of light and shadow, Robert Moffat sat in the great nave of Westminster, surrounded by the throng but alone in his grief and meditation. To no one present did the scene bring such a throbbing passion of memories, for the man who that day received the highest honor England can bestow upon her hero sons was his own son-in-law and the partner of his dearest hopes for Africa. The ritual of the burial service sounded rhythmic and steady through the cathedral nave, but the missionary was no longer under the great arches of Westminster but far away under a fragrant almond-tree which bloomed before a cottage door in Kuruman. A young man and woman stood before him there, awaiting with bowed heads his benediction to crown their marriage vows. On yet another day he stood under the shade of the old tree, watching an ox-cart creep away toward the north, while his thoughts followed wistfully after Mary, his own Mary, who was trekking away

through the forests to visit the bridal pair in their lonely frontier home and carry the comfort, which only a mother can, to the hearts of her troubled children. Then, in anguish of imagination, he bowed before that desolate scene in the rough cabin at Shupanga, where Mary Livingstone lay dying and a strong man knelt by her side, broken with grief but with face sternly set toward his unfinished task for Africa. And finally there passed before his mind that brave, sorrowful procession of black men, bearing on their shoulders the body of their leader, David Livingstone, through forest and jungle, hostile villages and fever-ridden marshes, all the way from Chitambo's Village in Ilala to the coast, a march of nine weary months. Could the world ask fuller proof of the African's loyalty than this feat of devotion, which for sheer love and bravery has scarcely a parallel in human history?

Through all the priceless memories of the past that clustered about Mary and the children, David Livingstone, Afrikaner, Mosilikatse, and all the loyal black people, Robert Moffat dreamed anew the future of his adopted country. Some day in the years or centuries to come that misguided,

overlooked, outcast continent of Africa would take its place in the great, forward movement of races and nations. God hasten the dawning of that day!

Robert and Mary Moffat! David and Mary Livingstone! From the depths of their loyal Scotch hearts they gave impassioned service to God for a continent of human need.

> They met the tyrant's brandished steel,
> The lion's gory mane,
> They bowed their necks the stroke to feel,
> Who follows in their train?

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